

# Prairie Soldier

THE JOINT NEWSPAPER OF THE NEBRASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD



**Then And Now:** Pfc. Thomas Brown, a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard's 110th Medical Battalion, wears a World War II-era uniform for the 70th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony of the role that Nebraska National Guard Soldiers played in the critical World War II battle of St. Lo, France. Brown and other members of the 110th Med. Bn. and 1-134th Cavalry served as the color guard for the July 16 commemoration ceremony held at the Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb.

Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

## Never Forgotten

■Nebraska Guardsmen honor vets, state's accomplishments during pivotal World War II battle in France

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
State Public Affairs Officer

Seventy years to the day that members of a Nebraska National Guard infantry regiment seized a critical hill that opened the way for the liberation of a strategically vital French city during World War II, members of today's Nebraska National Guard paused to commemorate the sacrifices made by their predecessors while also thanking two surviving veterans for their service.

"I would like to welcome our most distinguished guests... our veterans and their families who are in attendance," said Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, during the July 16 commemoration ceremony held at the Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska. "Your presence here is a great and deep honor for us."

"In fact, I think I speak for all of us when I say that we are humbled by your presence," said Bohac.

It's not hard to understand that feeling.

The two veterans in attendance – Bill Bush and D.E Bates – both are veterans of the Battle of St. Lo, France – a critical German-held city

in Normandy that the Allies had to seize in order to begin the breakout and eventual liberation operations of 1944. Playing a key role in the battle, which was conducted more than a month after the D-Day landings, were the 134th Infantry Regiment, 110th Medical Battalion and other supporting units that, prior to their mobilization in 1940, were Nebraska National Guard units.

Serving as part of the 35th Infantry Division, consisting of National Guard units from Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri, the Nebraska units arrived in Europe in May 1944. After some additional training in England, the units landed on Omaha Beach on July 5 and then waited in reserve as the U.S. V and XIX Corps struggled to liberate St. Lo. The city was situated on the banks of the Vire River near a vital crossroads that the Allies needed to open the interior of France for maneuver warfare after more than a month of bloody hedgerow fighting where advances were measured in terms of yards.

However, before St. Lo could be liberated, Hill 122 – so named because on military maps it stood 122 meters above sea level – had to be seized. That, however, was



**Greatest Generation:** Former Pvt. William Duane Bush, a member of the 110th Medical Battalion during the Battle of St. Lo, France, in July 1944, holds his hat, a ceremony program and a coin presented to him by Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, July 16, following the 70th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony of the role that Nebraska National Guard Soldiers played in the critical World War II battle.

easier said than done as the 29th Infantry Division, a fellow National Guard division that had landed on D-Day at Omaha Beach had found out after weeks of bloody fighting.

According to retired Col. James Huston, a former battalion intelligence officer who went on to write extensively about the 134th Infan-

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## 155th Air Refueling Wing welcomes new commander during August ceremony

By Staff Sgt. James Lieth  
Staff Photojournalist

Col. James "Bob" Stevenson assumed command of the 155th Air Refueling Wing during a change of command ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Nebraska, Aug. 2.

Col. Keith Schell, outgoing commander, relinquished command to Stevenson during a ceremony officiated by Brig. Gen. Jon Fago, assistant adjutant general-Air.

Fago expressed confidence and challenged the new commander.

"As I look to the future, I know we will be in good hands as we turn over the wing to Colonel Stevenson," said Fago. "I challenge you in this opportunity to lead and command this wing, to respect each and every Airman - past, present, and future. Please inspire this wing to new heights. I know you have the ability and talents to do that."

Before relinquishing command, Schell thanked the Guardsmen for their work and service.

"I have been in the unit over 33 years now and your dedication and hard work

See AIR GUARD on 14.



Photo by Staff Sgt. James Lieth

**New Command:** Brig. Gen. Jon Fago, assistant adjutant general-Air, passes the wing colors to Col. James "Bob" Stevenson, incoming 155th Air Refueling Wing commander, during a change of command ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 2. Stevenson became the wing's 10th commander after replacing Col. Keith Schell, who had commanded the wing since June 2012.

## Situation in Iraq still dangerous as Defense Department operations continue

By Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

While the threat of mass violence on Mount Sinjar in northern Iraq has passed, the threat from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant remains, and the United States continues its efforts to assist the Iraqi people caught up in violence, the Pentagon press secretary said Aug. 14.

Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby told Pentagon reporters the situation in Iraq remains dangerous, and he described the objectives of the U.S. military mission in the country set forth by President Barack Obama.

"The president has been clear about our limited military objectives in Iraq," he said. "They are, one, to protect American citizens and facilities, two, to provide advice and assistance to Iraqi forces as they battle ISIL; and, three, to join with international partners to address the humanitarian crisis."

The U.S. military remains ready to continue airstrikes to protect U.S. personnel and facilities and around Irbil and to protect the Yazidi people, Kirby said. The admiral emphasized that while U.S. airstrikes and humanitarian aid have had an impact on the situation in northern Iraq, the U.S. cannot provide a military solution to the nation's crisis.

"The only lasting solution is for the Iraqis to come together and form an inclusive gov-

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# NEWS DIGEST

## ■Tobacco use harms military readiness, official says

WASHINGTON (DoD News) – Because tobacco use is harmful to military readiness, the Defense Department has an added responsibility to curb its use, the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs said Aug. 12, noting that service members are more likely to use tobacco products than civilians.

Tobacco use can lead to excess oral cavity disease and morbidity, Dr. Jonathan Woodson said.

“It affects dental readiness, which is very important in making sure that we have a healthy force ready to deploy for the nation’s defense,” he said.

“We know that tobacco use figures prominently in development of cancers, but also there are many other health related consequences — (decreased) lung function, heart function, excess heart attacks and strokes,” Woodson said. “And so it’s something that we really do need to concentrate on as a public health issue for the services.”

In the coming decades, 171,000 of the personnel currently serving are likely to die prematurely due to tobacco use, he added.

“We have an extra responsibility to address this problem,” Woodson said. “The way I look at it is, just as we would leave nobody behind in the combat zone (and) we expend every effort to save the life of a battle buddy that’s on our right or on our left, we need to do the same with tobacco use.”

The Military Health System is partnered with tobacco cessation programs Action to Quit and U Can Quit 2 and has developed Operation Live Well, all in an effort to provide encouragement and resources to tobacco users looking to quit, he said.

The campaigns are more than just buzzwords, Woodson said.

“It’s about a concentrated effort to support the health of the men and women who serve — both immediately and long-term — by reducing the use of tobacco products,” he said.

This effort isn’t about denying the rights of service members, Woodson stressed, rather “it is about encouraging and creating environments to make healthy choices.”

Yet, “it’s also about protecting the non-smoker,” he added. “We know the issues that occur in terms of health-related effects from ambient smoke for nonsmokers and so we need to look at the issue of smoking in housing and smoking on installations, again, to protect the health of the entire force.”

Tobacco use is pernicious, Woodson said. “Individuals start and then they get addicted to it and then it becomes a lifelong habit,” with terrible health consequences, he said.

“You know, at one point in our history when we didn’t know so much about tobacco and its health effects, we actually supplied cigarettes in our rations,” Woodson said. But, he noted, as science demonstrated the harmful effects of tobacco use, the department reformed its policies to better serve the health of service members.

And concern for the health of the entire

force is at the heart of the Military Health System’s efforts, Woodson said.

“We need to address all potentially health-related habits that adversely affect the health of our servicemen and women,” he said. “... We want to encourage the development of more smoke-free installations, particularly where children learn, work and play — that’s very important for their health — but also we want to encourage ... healthy behaviors.”

## ■Hagel calls ISIL terrorists threat to civilized world

WASHINGTON (DoD News) – The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant poses a threat to the civilized world, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said in Sydney, Aug. 11.

At a joint news conference, Hagel and Australian Defense Minister David Johnston spoke about what their respective countries are doing in Iraq.

The United States will continue to support the Iraqi security forces “in every way that we can,” Hagel said. “We will, again, build partnerships, as we are now, recognizing the threat not just to the United States, but to the civilized world.”

The United States has launched airstrikes against ISIL targets in recent days, and has airdropped relief supplies to tens of thousands of Yazidis who have fled to Mount Sinjar in northern Iraq to seek refuge. American teams in Iraq will continue to assess the ISIL threat and what will best help the Iraqi security forces, Hagel said.

Australia is participating alongside the United States in airdropping supplies to the Yazidis — members of a religious sect in the region.

“We have some good skills in terms of the capacity to drop aid packages from the back of a C-130 Hercules,” Johnston said. “We acquired those skills over many years, but predominantly in the mountains around East Timor and Dili. And so, we’ve got ourselves deployed to be able to slot into American planning in that regard for the people that are entrapped in the mountains around Irbil in northeastern Iraq.”

The Australian defense minister remained mum on whether his country will launch airstrikes against ISIL. “With respect to ... muscling up, we don’t telegraph our punches in any shape or form, and there’s been no request for us to participate in combat,” he said.

“The situation for us at the moment is we are committed to helping the Americans and our friends who will join the Americans in providing humanitarian and disaster relief.”

Other countries have offered to assist in the effort in Iraq. President Barack Obama spoke yesterday to French President Francois Hollande and British Prime Minister David Cameron.

“This is a humanitarian issue of great consequence for all the world,” Hagel said. “And I think great powers understand they have responsibilities in this area.”

Hagel said the airstrikes against ISIL have been very effective.



## Remembering one of their own

Members of the 155th Air Refueling Wing salute one of the unit's KC-135R Stratotankers, July 24, at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb. The salute was part of a flight honoring Tech. Sgt. Mark Zordel, a crew chief with the 155th Maintenance Squadron who unexpectedly passed away July 23. Zordel was a respected member of the Nebraska Air National Guard where he had served for nearly 17 years.



## ■Obama: U.S. combat troops will not return to Iraq

FORT MEADE Md., (DoD News) — President Barack Obama has again emphasized that U.S. combat troops will not be sent back into Iraq even as the United States continues to provide military assistance to the Iraqi government and the Kurds in their battle against Sunni terrorists who have taken hold of large sections of the country.

In an address Aug. 26, to the American Legion’s annual convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, Obama said the security of the American people, including diplomats and military advisors in Iraq, remains his top priority, which is why he authorized airstrikes against fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

But he added “we’ll not allow the United States to be dragged back into another ground war in Iraq. Because ultimately, it is up to the Iraqis to bridge their differences and secure themselves.” And he said, “our military action in Iraq has to be part of a broader strategy to protect our people and support our partners to take the fight to ISIL.”

U.S. strategy is to strengthen partners and to provide more military assistance to government and Kurdish forces in Iraq and moderate opposition in Syria, Obama said. The United States also urges Iraq to form an inclusive government to build national unity and strong security forces. This will provide the “antidote against terrorists,” he said.

The United States is also building a coal-

ition of nations against ISIL, but America can and will defend its citizens. “Our message to anyone who harms our people is simple: America does not forget. Our reach is long. We are patient. Justice will be done,” the president said. “We have proved time and time again we will do what is necessary ... to go after those who harm Americans.”

He made the comments just days after American journalist James Foley, who had been held captive by ISIL terrorists for two years, was beheaded on video.

The American military is ready to take direct action when ordered, Obama said.

“Rooting out a cancer like ISIL won’t be easy, and it won’t be quick,” he said. “But tyrants and murderers before them should recognize that kind of hateful vision ultimately is no match for the strength and hopes of people who stand together for the security and dignity and freedom that is the birthright of every human being.”

Overall, the president said that the United States will continue to lead in the 21st century.

“Nobody else can do what we do,” Obama said. No other nation, he added, does more to underwrite the security and prosperity on which the world depends. In times of crisis, no other nation can rally such broad coalitions to stand up for international norms and peace, he said.

Even nations that criticize the United States turn to America when the chips are down, he said. “That’s what American leadership looks like,” he said. “It’s why the United States is, and will remain, the one indispensable nation in the world.”

## IRAQ

continued from page 1.

ernment that represents the legitimate interests of all Iraqi citizens and unifies the country in its fight against ISIL.”

The admiral discussed the findings of the team of U.S. service members dispatched to Irbil, who are working alongside U.S. Agency for International Development personnel, to assess the situation on Mount Sinjar.

“The team assessed that there are far fewer Yazidis trapped on Mount Sinjar than previously feared,” Kirby said. “That’s largely because of our successful humanitarian airdrops and U.S. airstrikes on ISIL targets. These are the kinds of missions, as you know, that the military trains for all the time, and we do it better than anybody else.”

These efforts, Kirby said, enabled Kurdish Peshmerga forces to assist thousands of Yazidis in evacuating from the mountain nightly over the last several days.

*“The only lasting solution is for the Iraqis to come together and form an inclusive government that represents the legitimate interests of all Iraqi citizens and unifies the country in its fight against ISIL.”*

— **Rear Adm. John Kirby**  
*Pentagon Press Secretary*

“Those who remain on Mount Sinjar are in better condition than we previously thought they might be,” the press secretary said. “They continue to have access to the food and water that we have airdropped. And as you may know, we did yet another airdrop last night.”

Kirby said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel lauded the skill and professionalism of the U.S. military, and he noted that Hagel was “very proud” the department has been

able to bring about this kind of change around Mount Sinjar.

“While this assessment has led us to conclude that an evacuation mission is far less likely, we’re not taking our eye off the ball with respect to the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, Kirby said. “We continue to assess the needs of the Yazidi people, as well as others who have been displaced in northern Iraq.”

The admiral said additional humanitarian airdrops will be conducted if necessary, and he expressed Hagel’s appreciation for international partners and their willingness to assist.

The secretary has made it very clear that he is extraordinarily grateful for the offers made by Great Britain, France, Australia and others to provide assistance to the Iraqi people, Kirby said.

“We are going to continue to need the help of our international partners,” he added. “This is going to have to continue to be a focus of the international community, not just the United States.”

## Prairie Soldier

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Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

**Spotted:** A crew from the Nebraska National Guard’s Company A, 1-376th Aviation Battalion, searches for “suspects” above Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., Aug. 12, in an LUH-72 ‘Lakota’ helicopter equipped with the Mission Equipment Package during their annual training. During the Mead exercise, the unit worked with the Nebraska National Guard’s Joint Operation Center, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and Saunders County Sheriff’s office to work out communication issues should the Guard helicopter be called to support local law enforcement.

# Aviators test equipment, interagency coordination

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon  
Editor

Guardsmen with the Nebraska National Guard’s Company A, 1-376th Aviation Battalion, recently had an opportunity to showcase some of their newer equipment during the unit’s annual training.

The annual training began Aug. 4-8 at Vigilant Guard, a multi-state emergency response exercise hosted by the Kansas National Guard at ‘Crisis City’ near Salina, Kansas. They then traveled to Camp Ashland Training Site near Ashland, Nebraska, to conduct an exercise with the Nebraska National Guard’s Joint Operation Center, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and Saunders County Sheriff’s office, Aug. 12.

During the exercise, members of Co. A, 1-376th Avn., flew an LUH-72 ‘Lakota’ helicopter outfitted with the Mission Equipment Package, or MEP, for scenarios at the Mead Training Site near Mead, Nebraska. The primary goal was to provide a live-video feed back from the helicopter to a Tactical Operation Center at Camp Ashland, which was then streamed to the JOC in Lincoln. The Saunders County Sheriff’s office was also involved in the exercise, further testing interagency communication and teamwork.

“Today is an interoperability exercise with the JOC and NEMA,” said Capt. David Neth, flight platoon leader with Co. A, 1-376th Avn. “That’s what we want to get out of it – to show them our capabilities so that way, hopefully, they think about us when they call up Soldiers for duty.”

The MEP helicopter is outfitted with equipment allowing it to become the eyes and ears in the sky.

According to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Keal Bockelman, training officer for Co. A, 1-376th Avn., on the nose of the MEP LUH-72 is a movable housing containing multiple cameras, which allows an operator in the back to provide live real-time video that can be down-linked to the TOC on the ground. It contains a wide-view, narrow-view and infrared thermal camera.

The helicopter is equipped with a 30 million candlepower spot-



**Can You Hear Me Now:** Chief Warrant Officer 3 Keal Bockelman, training officer for Company A, 1-376th Aviation Battalion, ensures communication equipment on a Mission Equipment Package-equipped LUH-72 ‘Lakota’ helicopter is functional prior to an interagency exercise, Aug. 12, at Camp Ashland, Neb. During the exercise the helicopter flew over Mead Training Site and relayed real-time video to the Tactical Operations Center at Camp Ashland.

light, affectionately call the ‘night sun,’ along with a radio frequency repeater, allowing for greater communication between agencies.

“It has the thermal camera and it has the night sun,” said Neth. “With the camera and this package there’s an operator station in the back. The operator can move the camera up and down, left and right and basically search for people or things on the ground.”

During one scenario the helicopter took off from Camp Ashland and made the short flight to Mead Training Site where the pilots established communication with two Saunders County deputies on the ground. Once in communication,

the MEP helicopter searched for “suspects” described by deputies. Once the suspects were located with the help of the onboard cameras, the pilots led deputies to their location for capture.

The whole search was streamed to the TOC via tactical downlink from the helicopter and provided to decision makers in the JOC in Lincoln.

“The main thing we were going for was to ensure that we have communication between the aircraft and the JOC, and the aircraft and the law enforcement agency,” said Bockelman. “We accomplished those things and even did a link – a radio relay between the JOC frequency



**Real-Time Video:** Sgt. Richard Shearer, a crew chief with Company A, 1-376th Aviation Battalion, controls camera equipment on a Mission Equipment Package-equipped LUH-72 ‘Lakota’ helicopter during an exercise above Mead Training Site, Aug. 12. The control works three different cameras mounted on the front of the aircraft used to view or search for things on the ground.



**Great Picture:** A hand-held display receives a direct downlink from an LUH-72 ‘Lakota’ helicopter at Camp Ashland, Neb. The device displays real-time video from the Mission Equipment Package-equipped helicopter, which was flying above Mead Training Site near Mead, Neb., during an interagency exercise.

and the Saunders County Sheriff’s office.”

“We had four different agencies really talking together,” he added. “We have the unit, we have the JOC, we have NEMA and we also have local law enforcement and that’s a key factor to see how we all operate.”

That interagency operation is evident in a mission the Nebraska National Guard aviators have been performing on the U.S. border with Mexico. There the Nebraskans fly the MEP LUH-72 with a border patrol officer onboard.

“The border patrol agent runs the mission,” said Neth. “The pilots are there to keep the aircraft safe and the camera operator is the person searching on the ground.”

“It’s a good mission,” added Neth. “You feel like you’re doing an important role supporting law enforcement.”

But outside of that border security mission, the Nebraska aviators said they can provide local law enforcement or even the governor that critical piece of information that can make a difference during a disaster.

“If there was a chemical leak in the area, we could provide command and control optics and video of the situation from a safe distance,” said Neth. “We can also help support counterdrug activity if the State Patrol or local law enforcement would ever request that.”

“We feel like as a citizen and resident, to be able to help out our own state it makes a person feel good,” he added. “Those opportunities don’t happen often, but when they do come up, we as Soldiers want to step up and fulfill the role.”

“It’s definitely very rewarding to be able to do our job. And to get the situational awareness from the site to the decision makers is kind of an important link to make,” said Bockelman. “It gives purpose to the members of our unit when we can make a difference and of course that’s why we all joined the service in the first place.”





Photos by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

**Shared History:** An American and French flag greet 134th Infantry Regiment veterans of the Battle of St. Lo, France, and their families prior to the start of the 70th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony of the role that Nebraska National Guard Soldiers played in the critical World War II battle, July 16, at the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb.

# ST. LO

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try Regiment following the war, the hill was the lynchpin to the German defenses in the area.

“Hill 122...did not loom as a high, dominating terrain feature from the north, but rather it consisted as a series of plateaus – with the usual hedgerows and sunken roads running across its gently-sloping face,” Huston wrote following the war in a regimental history book that he co-authored with then-Maj. Gen. Butler Miltonberger, who had commanded the 134th Infantry Regt. during the battle. “But the nature of the elevation gave the enemy an even greater than ordinary advantage in observation, and his well-co-ordinated defensive firing positions made the hill foreboding enough. Its tactical importance became more apparent with a closer study of the maps and aerial photographs; it seemed clear that here was the key to the whole situation; this terrain dominated St. Lo which nestled below in a saucer-like valley at the bend of the Vire River.”

“Hill 122, then, was the immediate objective.”

Taking over positions outside of Villiers-Fossard from the 29th Division’s 115th Infantry Regiment, the Nebraska Soldiers began their assault on the morning of July 15, 1945.

After taking the fortified farmhouses of Emilie in fierce fighting, the 134th Infantry Regiment reached the upper slopes of Hill 122 by nightfall.

They then repulsed a determined German counter-attack before launching an attack of their own which resulted in the capture of Hill 122 by daybreak on July 16.

The hill’s capture came at a bitter cost. In just two days of combat, the 134th Infantry Regt. had suffered nearly 800 casualties including 102 dead.

The capture of the vital hill opened up St. Lo, however. Two days later on July 18, members of the 134th Infantry Regt, including a patrol led by future National Guard Bureau chief Francis L. Greenleaf, began to enter the outskirts of St. Lo in pursuit of routed German forces. They were, according to Greenleaf and other Nebraska veterans, the first Americans to enter the devastated city.

By that time, the Nebraska regiment’s casualty figures had surpassed 900.

Sixty-five years later the regiment’s feat would be formally recognized by the citizens of St. Lo when they unveiled a plaque signifying the location where the Ne-



**Patchwork:** Pfc. Thomas Brown, a member of the Nebraska Army National Guard’s 110th Medical Battalion, wears a World War II-era uniform with the 35th Infantry Division’s distinctive “Wagon Wheel” patch for the 70th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony of the role that Nebraska National Guard Soldiers played in the critical World War II battle of St. Lo, France.

braska patrols had crossed into the city’s limits. The ceremony came a day following a similar ceremony honoring the memory of the late Lt. Col. Alfred Thomsen, commander of the regiment’s 3rd Battalion who was mortally wounded a few days after the liberation of St. Lo, in the tiny village of Le Mesnil Rouxelin.

This year’s ceremony in Lincoln was designed to recognize the sacrifices of the veterans and their families, while also reinforcing among today’s Nebraska Guardsmen an understanding of the legacy that they now hold.

“Today, as we commemorate the Nebraska Guard’s role in this pivotal battle, we should be proud of our veterans and our organization,” said Bohac. “This isn’t just their heritage... it’s our history as well. It’s a heritage that should be preserved, celebrated and, when possible, learned from.”

Governor Dave Heineman echoed those comments.

“The role that our Soldiers played in World War II is part of our state and our nation’s history that we should never forget,” said Heineman. “It is something that we must take time out to reflect upon.”

“That’s what today’s ceremony is all about,” he added.

That was definitely evidenced by a letter from Col. Arnaud Dumont, a member of the French Army who had served with members of the Nebraska Army National Guard during a deployment to Afghanistan.

“Rest assured of the remembrance and the unwavering link



**Brothers In Arms:** Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, speaks with De Verne Elroy Bates, a veteran of the 134th Infantry Regiment who fought at the Battle of St. Lo, France, in July 1944, prior to the start of the 70th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony that honored of the role that Nebraska National Guard Soldiers played in the critical World War II battle. The ceremony was held July 16 at the Nebraska National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb.



**Translation:** Marie Hillabrand, whose grandfather lived in St. Lo at the time of the battle, and Spencer Hunt, who is the grandson of William Bush, a veteran of the 110th Medical Battalion who fought there in World War II, read a letter from Col. Arnaud Dumont, a member of the French Army who had served with members of the Nebraska Army National Guard during a deployment to Afghanistan. The letter was first read in French by Hillabrand and then in English by Hunt.

we have with the United States of America,” wrote Arnaud. “As a citizen, this commitment requires me; as a soldier, this commitment

guides me... Wearing for a few weeks the insignia of the Screaming Eagles reminded me daily dreams that I have had as a young

man. These dreams are nightmares of the memories of the fighting eventually led to our regained freedom, and the continued integrity of our values. You have given this freedom to an entire nation and an entire continent.”

The letter was read in both French and English by Marie Hillabrand, whose grandfather lived in St. Lo at the time of the battle, and Spencer Hunt, who is the grandson of Bill Bush who fought there.

Also recognized during the ceremony were Ruby Genrich, the widow of Herman Genrich, and Ester Niemann, the widow of Loren Niemann, both veterans of the Nebraska units that fought at St. Lo.

The ceremony also included a consolidated color guard made up of representatives of the current 1-134th Cavalry and 110th Medical Battalion outfitted in current and World War II-era uniforms, a moment of silence and a ceremonial volley, and a playing of the NETV documentary “All Hell Can’t Stop Us.”





Photos by Jerry Meyer

**Careful:** Members of the Nebraska National Guard and contractors place an M-60 Main Battle Tank onto a concrete stand at its new home outside the Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward, Neb., June 25. The armored vehicle was one of four that were moved from the State Arsenal Museum in Lincoln, Neb. to their new home outside the Seward Armory.



**Oversize Load:** An M-60 Main Battle Tank arrives outside the Seward Armory in Seward, Neb., June 25, where it will be on permanent display outside of the new Nebraska National Guard Museum.

# Tanks a lot

■Historic Nebraska National Guard armored vehicles make move to new home in Seward

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock  
Staff Photojournalist

The Nebraska National Guard moved four armored vehicles, including a World War II-era tank June 25, from the State Arsenal Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska, to the Guard’s new museum at the Seward Armory in Seward, Nebraska.

The vehicles include an M-4 Sherman, an M-60 Main Battle Tank, and an M-113 and an M-59 Armored Personal Carrier.

According to the Nebraska state historian, Jerry Meyer, the vehicles were all used for Nebraska National Guard training purposes throughout their time in service and since



**Mini Parade:** Members of the Nebraska National Guard and distinguished guests from Seward, Neb., line up for a mini parade through Seward on June 25 as the historical vehicles move to their new home at the Seward Armory.



**Light As A Feather:** Members of the 189th Transportation Company help place an M-4 Sherman Tank on a concrete pad outside of the new Nebraska National Guard Museum location in Seward, Neb., June 25.

have been part of the Nebraska National Guard historical displays. Motor transport operators from the 189th Transportation

Company and a civilian carrier delivered the vehicles to Seward. “It took a lot of preparation and work to get them to Seward,”

said Meyer. “So I’m glad they were delivered safely.” Trucks were lined up just outside of downtown Seward following

Nebraska National Guard jeeps into town for a small parade as they made their way to their new home at the Seward Armory. Distinguished guests of the Nebraska National Guard and Seward community filled the jeeps as the town welcomed the pieces of history.

Once at their new home, the armored vehicles were placed on specially created concrete pads around the Seward Armory.

“The vehicles are the talk of the town at the coffee shop and other gathering places,” said Meyer. “It’s great to have this level of interest in the home of the new museum.”

The vehicles are only four of the more than 10,000 pieces of history that will be displayed at the Nebraska National Guard Museum in their new home in Seward.

“The vehicles will be our ‘wow’ displays in the front and back of the museum,” said Meyer. “The M-4 Sherman will be landscaped to look like it’s coming out of a hedge row.”

## Longtime Guardsman, teacher takes helm as new Nebraska National Guard state historian

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock  
Staff Photojournalist

In April, Gerald “Jerry” Meyer became the new state historian for the Nebraska National Guard and curator of the Nebraska National Guard Museum.

The museum is currently in the process of renovating the Seward Armory and bringing it to life as the new home of the museum in Seward, Nebraska.

Meyer brings to the job a diverse background in history and education as well as his love for his country and state. He’s been a member of the National Guard for 30 years joining the Nebraska National Guard in 1997.

Meyer is a lieutenant colonel in the Nebraska National Guard and serves as the plans and policy officer for Joint Force Headquarters.

Meyer has a bachelor’s degree in History Education from University of Northern Iowa and his master’s in Curriculum and Instruction from Wayne State College.



Meyer

According to Meyer, he is looking forward to hearing all the stories that tell the history of the Nebraska National Guard.

“I love my job and the people I deal with on a daily basis,” said Meyer. “I look forward to getting the museum going and teaching in the learning center in the museum.”

“This job is a win-win for me with my love of history and teaching,” he added.

According to Meyer, he is very dedicated to the museum and hopes to see the Nebraska National Guard Museum on the top 10 list of free attractions in the entire state of Nebraska.

The Nebraska National Guard Museum dedication is scheduled for July 4, 2015.

## Seward greets new Guard museum during 4th of July celebration

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock  
Staff Photojournalist

Nebraska’s annual Fourth of July celebration drew in a crowd of people for the unveiling of the official Nebraska National Guard Museum sign and planting of a freedom tree, July 4, in Seward, Nebraska.

People from the Seward area, Nebraska and surrounding states filled the town for a celebration of “America’s Small Town 4th of July City.”

The Nebraska National Guard Museum had the privilege of unveiling the museum’s official sign and a tree planting ceremony during the town’s festivities.

Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, Josh Eickmeier, Seward’s mayor and other distinguished guests were in attendance. Both Bohac and Eickmeier spoke of the great relationship the city of Seward and the Nebraska National Guard has and will continue to develop over the years.

In addition to the ceremony, there were a few displays from the museum out for the public to see along with Nebraska Army National Guard games and recruiters.

“We had over 100 people in attendance at the dedication,” said Jerry Meyer, the Nebraska state historian. “And over 800 people visited the temporary displays.”

Members of the Nebraska National Guard also drove two World War II era jeeps, an M38 and M38AI, and several Nebraska National Guard vehicles through the parade.

“Approximately 40,000 people at the



Photos by Jerry Meyer



**It’s Official:** Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, Josh Eickmeier, Seward’s mayor, and other distinguished guests reveal a sign and plant a freedom tree at the Seward Armory in Seward, Neb., July 4.

parade were able to see the Nebraska National Guard vehicles and that the Nebraska National Guard Museum will open in Seward in the next few years,” said Meyer.

According to spectators, it was great to see that Seward is going to be the new home of the Nebraska National Guard Museum and would be an enormous attraction for tourists and locals to visit.

“We received great feedback,” said Meyer. “Everyone can’t wait to see the progress and are looking forward to the museum.”



**Sparks Flying:** Guardsmen from the 623rd Vertical Engineer Company cut a hole through a slab of cement to rescue simulated victims trapped under rubble, Aug. 5, in Crisis City, near Salina, Kan. The 623rd Engineers are part of the Nebraska National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Enhanced Response Force Package, which consists of both Army and Air Guardsmen.



**Gearing Up:** Sgt. Amanda Sedivy, a member of Detachment 1, 754th Chemical Reconnaissance/Decontamination Company, tapes up her battle buddy's protective suit to make sure there is no exposure to contaminants during Vigilant Guard, Aug. 6, near Salina, Kan. Vigilant Guard is a multi-state emergency response exercise hosted by the Kansas National Guard.

# Guardsmen visit Kansas' Crisis City

By Sgt. Jason Drager  
Staff Writer

The Nebraska National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Enhanced Response Force Package participated in a training exercise known as Vigilant Guard, Aug. 3-7, at Crisis City near Salina, Kansas. The team, better known as CERF-P, was joined by the Missouri National Guard's Homeland Response Force and supported by the Kansas National Guard. The CERF-P, comprised of more than 190 members of the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard, was tasked with responding to a hypothetical natural disaster. Using Missouri's equipment, the Nebraska CERF-P and the Missouri CBRN Task Force, which is similar to Nebraska's CERF-P, worked in shifts for several days to find simulated victims of the disaster, decontaminate and then treat them. The CERF-P consists of several different sections: command and control, search and extraction, decontamination, medical, and fatality search and recovery team. Each section was charged with its own mission and responsibilities, however, they had to work together to accomplish the overall mission. In previous years the Nebraska CERF-P conducted training missions without another state's involvement and used their own equipment. "The big thing we were trying to do here was work with the Missouri Homeland Response Force



Photos by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

**Testing:** A member of the 754th Chemical Reconnaissance/Decontamination Company checks another Soldier to see if she was contaminated when she helped rescue 'victims' during a training exercise near Salina, Kan., on Aug. 6.



**Help Is On The Way:** Members of the Nebraska National Guard's 623rd Vertical Engineering Company work in teams to move "injured personnel" during the Vigilant Guard exercise, Aug. 6, at Crisis City near Salina, Kan. The Guardsmen from the 623rd Engineer Co. are trained to rescue victims if a real-life disaster were to occur.

and preform a relief in place," said Sgt. 1st Class Eric Gettert, CERF-P operations noncommissioned officer. A relief in place is designed for one team to relieve another team of their duties, falling in on the same equipment, said Gettert. "All the other exercises I've been part of, we always set up on our own equipment," said Capt. Ryan Becker, an Air Force flight

surgeon. "This particular exercise was different because we came in on someone else's footprint, used their equipment and tried to accomplish the same mission." Each day of the exercise, the Missouri CRBN Task Force was responsible for the disaster site from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. and then the Nebraska CERF-P team took over from noon to 7 p.m. "This was a more realistic

exercise working with Missouri," said Becker. "Overall, we improved everyday as team." Throughout the mission, the Response International Group and the Joint Interagency Training and Education Center were evaluating the team. JITEC is responsible for evaluating all the CERF-P teams in the National Guard, while RIG teaches all basic search and extraction courses.

"The evaluators said we are one of the best CERF-P teams they've seen in the country," said Gettert. "They were really impressed with all of our team members and how well we work together." The next training mission for CERFP will take them to Puerto Rico in March of 2015 to train with the Puerto Rico and the West Virginia National Guard CERF-P teams.

## Engineers stand 'Vigilant Guard' during Kansas exercise

### ■Nebraska engineer company lends hand at Crisis City operation

By Spc. Anna Laurin  
105th Mobile  
Public Affairs Detachment

Not all military training is for a direct company mission, which is exactly what type of training Soldiers of the Nebraska Army National Guard were doing in an extraction drill during Vigilant Guard 2014, hosted by the Kansas National Guard at Crisis City, Salina, Kansas, Aug. 3-7. Vigilant Guard is a multi-state emergency response exercise hosted by the Kansas National Guard. The 632nd Vertical Engineer Company, Nebraska Army National Guard, assembled teams to practice their rope-handling skills in a drill designed to prepare the Soldiers to rescue actual victims in a real disaster. "Our exercise today was to extract three victims out of an elevator shaft," said Sgt. John Langley, carpentry and masonry specialist with the 632nd Vertical Eng. Co., and team leader for the mission. "We were focused on how to hook up a proper rope system to successfully rescue victims." Handling ropes and rescuing mock victims and mannequins is not a common opportunity for all members of the 632nd Vertical Eng. Co. "We only do this type of training two or three times a year," said Langley. "Practicing with the ropes on the drill floor and



Photos by Sgt. Zach Sheely

**Don't Look Down:** Sgt. Dave Hampton, a plumber with the 632nd Vertical Engineer Company, Nebraska National Guard, is extracted from an elevator shaft during Vigilant Guard 2014, a joint exercise hosted by Kansas at Crisis City near Salina, Kan., Aug. 4. The Soldiers are lowered into the shaft via a rope and pulley system to help secure the victims into a Sked Rescue System, which helps raise them to safety.



**Teamwork:** Members of the 181st Engineer Detachment Firefighting Team and the 632nd Vertical Engineer Company work together in an exercise to extract victims from an elevator shaft during Vigilant Guard 2014, a joint emergency response exercise hosted by the Kansas National Guard, at Crisis City near Salina, Kan., Aug. 4-7.

tying knots was a lot of the preparation we did for this exercise." The teams are made up of different elements, like firefighters, who are attached to the engineers to assist during these exercises and in actual emergency situations. "They practice handling the ropes a lot more than we do," said Langley. "They are more proficient." Although not all of the Soldiers work with rescue skills on a first-line mission, they understand how important the training is. "Becoming more proficient in our search and extraction skills is very important," said Langley. "It's our job state side, and when we come out here to train we get better and

better at it." Overall, the mission was a success and Langley was happy with the teamwork his Soldiers put forth. "The team did great," said Langley. "The teamwork was fantastic. Everyone worked together and had great communication. This was probably one of the best rope missions I've been on."



# Practice Makes Perfect

## Nebraska Air Guardsmen get valuable training in Georgia

By Staff Sgt. Mary Thach  
Staff Photojournalist

The Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing sent 18 air transportation small air terminal members and four members of the 155th Sustainment Services Flight on a four-day proficiency training mission to the Transportation Proficiency Center at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, July 11-14.

The 155th ARW sends small air terminal members to Dobbins ARB bi-annually for re-certification and familiarization of all equipment and job functions. In addition to the air terminal Airmen, services personnel were given the opportunity to practice their own jobs by setting up a mobile kitchen and preparing several meals over the course of the weekend.

"We take the whole air transportation section every two years on this fly-away program to get them proficiency trained," said Master Sgt. Adam Dytrych, air transportation small air terminal section chief.

Dytrych said air transportation personnel were able to perform proficiency training on everything that the career field consists of, including air terminal and cargo operations, special handling, ramp operations, and passenger services.

The 155th ARW started training at the TPC four years ago and has developed a strong bond with the Georgia Air Force Reserve unit. Dytrych, although he's tried to spread the word, said there are not many Guard units that train at TPC, while many are unaware they can.

"They have the toys. They have static aircraft: static C-5 and static C-130," said Dytrych. "We can afford to make mistakes down here without affecting a real mission. So we practice. There is no other place that you can go where you can learn your job and be in an atmosphere where you can make a mistake. They learn here so they can operate safely and effectively out in the field."

According to Senior Master Sgt. Mark Farrington, a TPC aerial port instructor, the Nebraska Air National Guardsmen were impressive.

"The unit flew in from Nebraska, hit the ground, and assumed possession of all of our assets," said Farrington. "Our vehicles, offices, computers, and they set it up as if they came to a base and assumed responsibility for all aircraft arriving and leaving this destination."

Farrington said annual training at a hands-on facility, such as TPC with static airframes and large-grade vehicles that would be used during a deployment, is vital to a small air terminal Airmen's career.

"Being Guardsmen or Reservist, you do it part-time, so you lose a lot of your edge by only doing it on occasion," said Farrington. "(This training) helps shake the rust off the experience. It gives the leadership an opportunity to lead, to learn from it and to mentor the younger troops... It's important for the overall process for the war or humanitarian effort."

That's particularly important considering that air transportation personnel handle all of the logistics of moving equipment and on-loading and off-loading cargo and passengers. Without logistics, people and equipment cannot get where the mission requires them to be, said Farrington.

According to Master Sgt. Jarrod Tisthammer, 155th ARW air transportation superintendent, the team trains two weeks annually at an active duty air base, however, the Georgia training is crucial to the Airmen's ability to prepare. "The difference here at this station is we can actually tailor the training to whatever we need."

"When we do our two-week train-



Photos by Staff Sgt. Mary Thach

**Spotter:** Senior Airman Tyler Kleinschmit, 155th Small Air Terminal, guides Staff Sgt. Christine Ebel, also with the 155th Small Air Terminal, as she drives a 10K A/T Forklift. Ebel was moving the forklift into position to receive a pallet that she then loaded onto a 60K Aircraft Turner, which in turn, was loaded onto an aircraft during annual proficiency training at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., July 11-14.



**Good Eats:** Airman First Class Katherine Welsh, 155th Sustainment Services Flight, serves lunch to members of the 155th Small Air Terminal at the Transportation Proficiency Center, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., July 11-14. Four members of the services flight traveled to TPC for upgrade training and to serve several meals throughout the weekend.



**Heavy Lifting:** Senior Airman Tyler Kleinschmit, a member of the 155th Small Air Terminal, loads training cargo in preparation to build pallets during the annual proficiency training at the Transportation Proficiency Center at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., July 11-14. Cargo operations are one of four functions small air terminal specialists are required to know.



**Loading Instructions:** (From left) Tech. Sgt. Christine Ebel, Airman Nicholas Jackson, Staff Sgt. Melissa Kammin and Staff Sgt. Jamie Saner, members of the 155th Small Air Terminal, receive instructions from Senior Master Sgt. Luis Agredo, a Transportation Proficiency Center aerial port instructor, before off-loading a vehicle from a static C-5 aircraft during their annual proficiency training at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., July 11-14.

ing at an active duty base, we may not get the training we are actually looking for," said Tisthammer. "It is going to be whatever the mission dictates, because it will be an actual real-world mission. But at TPC, if we have folks that need certain tasks done, we can specifically get them into a role that would accomplish that task. The benefit here is we can get the training that we want and need, therefore, providing a more

well-rounded Airman."

Dytrych said without annual tours to active duty bases or a fly-away training program, the Airmen in his shop could not be proficient in their jobs. That in turn means if they are called upon to deploy, they may not be ready to perform their part of the mission.

Dytrych added it is crucial that the Airmen are well practiced and build their confidence operating

equipment and all job functions while they are at TPC. Once deployed, Airmen rely on the knowledge they gained at TPC.

"It gives them confidence," said Dytrych. "These guys know their job, but doing it on a month-to-month basis, they forget it. They lose proficiency quickly, so we come to TPC. We have a lot of smart people in this career field. They know their job, regulations, and how to do their job but it takes repetition to gain confidence in doing the job. That's where this training comes into play."

Because the 155th ARW's aircraft is a KC-135R Stratotanker, the primary mission is aerial refueling, while the secondary mission is transporting personnel and cargo. When deployed, however, air transportation personnel work with other airframes in addition to large machinery and vehicles that the Nebraska Air Guard does not use. So, it's critical to train on the equipment offered at TPC.

"The main focus here is to get the troops trained on the things that we do not do regularly at our base, or the things that we do not have the capacity to do because we don't have the airframes, we don't have the equipment," said Tisthammer. "This facility provides us with a lot of tools that we can provide our Air-

men to gain proficiency on the tasks that we can't do at home station."

The 155th SSF members deployed four Airman, three in up-grade training. They prepared numerous meals throughout the weekend and focused on some of their own training tasks.

"We are serving the food for the training crew that we came with," said Tech. Sgt. Rusty Zortman, the services noncommissioned officer-in-charge. "We do breakfast, lunch, and dinner."

Zortman said they occasionally provided Meals-Ready to Eat for lunch and often used Unit Group Rations for dinner.

The goal of the services personnel was to focus on field training and help support the air transportation Airmen. He said it was important for the younger Airmen in services to see additional missions the Sustainment Services Flight is responsible for while at TPC.

"They get to see what we do for a mission when we actually travel," said Zortman. "When we are at (our) base we do a lot with food. When we are here, we touch base with our recreation teams, our fitness teams, and our mortuary teams. We get to see a little bit of that stuff at our base, but when we travel we get to do more."

Zortman said he was pleased with how his Airmen-in-training performed.

"They act like veterans. I don't even have to come in and manage all that much," said Zortman. "They know exactly what they need to do and how to get it done. All the paperwork gets done by them, so I don't even have to do that. It's really nice and good to see them come here and run it like they have been here before."

Farrington complimented the Nebraska National Guard on their professionalism on- and off-duty and their eagerness to learn.

"This is one of my favorite units. They always come down here with a good attitude," said Farrington. "I have had many of these students here for load planning, joint inspection courses, or even the turner (aircraft loader) course. They are always open and receptive. Your technicians are very bright and they are good leaders. I enjoy this group very much."



# Military police officers test new skills at Fort Leavenworth

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock  
Staff Photojournalist

After the 402nd Military Police Internment/Resettlement Battalion's 2010-11 deployment and 2013 transition from military police to internment and resettlement specialists, the unit was ready to put its new skills to use during their 2014 annual training.

The Omaha, Nebraska-based 402nd MP I/R Bn. traveled to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for their July 19-Aug. 2, annual training where members of the unit were able to work with and train beside their active duty counterparts in addition to using active duty training facilities.

According to Lt. Col. Eric Hunsberger, commander of the 402nd MP I/R Bn., the annual training focused on their core mission essential task list, which is detainee operations, but their other sections, such as the cooks, supply specialists, maintenance specialists and engineers were also able to work with their active duty counterparts in each of their own areas on Fort Leavenworth.

"Bottom line, our mission is to provide detainee operations, which in doing so we have partnered with the 40th Military Police Battalion providing inside prison correction officers in line with the active component," said Hunsberger. "And the Headquarters and Headquarters Company provides mission command for the 402nd Military Police Battalion."

"Everyone is doing their core METL job," added Hunsberger. "It is what they signed up for and reinforces their mission and purpose as part of the National Guard."

The 402nd MP I/R Bn. Soldiers were happy with the training and opportunities that Fort Leavenworth provided over their two weeks of annual training.

According to Spc. Robert Fike, a preventive medicine specialist with the 402nd MP I/R Bn., the annual training was a great learning experience.



Photos by Sgt. Jason Drager

**Teamwork:** Members of the 402nd Military Police Internment/Resettlement Battalion subdue a detainee during the unit's annual training at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., July 29. Members of the unit were able to work and train with their active duty counterparts in their own job fields during the annual training.

"It's really cool that I get to experience what I would get to do on a deployment or in my job setting," said Fike. "And talking with the active duty Soldiers in this career field is awesome. I've been able to see and do my job hands on with the active Soldiers which is a great experience because they tell you the ins and outs of our job since they do it full-time."

Training with their active duty counterparts really boosted unit morale making the overall experience rewarding for everyone.

"Annual training has been outstanding," said Staff Sgt. Darrin Fulford, compound non-commissioned officer with the 402nd MP I/R Bn. "We came down to Fort Leavenworth to work at the United States Disciplinary Barracks and we have completed that mission.



**Forced Entry:** 402nd Military Police Internment/Resettlement Battalion specialists prepare to enter a room where they have to subdue a detainee during the unit's annual training at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., July 29.



**Quiet Riot:** 402nd Military Police Internment/Resettlement Battalion specialists practice their riot control movements, July 29, at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. In addition to training on their military occupations, the Nebraska Soldiers were able to work within the United States Disciplinary Barracks.

A lot of 402nd have been overseas and worked detainee operations overseas, but detainee operations and disciplinary barracks are two different things."

Fulford said the annual training also allowed the Nebraska Soldiers to learn more about their new military occupation specialties. "It was a great experience for

our lower enlisted because they got the chance to go inside a facility and see how it works," said Fulford. "Working with the active Soldiers here at Fort Leavenworth has been great because they know their jobs, they are professionals and they have showed us the correct way to perform the duties as internment/resettlement specialists within the United States Disciplinary Barracks."

In addition to working at the United States Disciplinary Barracks, the internment and resettlement Soldiers were able to use Fort Leavenworth's mock facility, which is specifically designed for internment and resettlement.

"This mock facility will show our Soldiers what it is like to actually run an internment and resettlement facility," said Fulford. "It will provide our Soldiers with a mental image. You can always see something but it's different when you can actually put it into practice."

## Omaha-based engineers use annual training to improve Kansas post's trail system

By Jennifer Walleman  
Fort Leavenworth Lamp Writer

A recent project by seven Nebraska National Guard engineers may be the spark the Fort Leavenworth multiuse trail needed.

Seventy-nine Army National Guard Soldiers, from the Omaha-based 402nd Military Police Internment/Resettlement Battalion arrived at Fort Leavenworth July 19 for their two-week annual training with the 40th Military Police Internment/Resettlement Battalion.

"This is our first year working with Leavenworth," said 1st Lt. David Lange, 402nd MP I/R Bn. "Our commander has been trying to get us attached to the 40th in Leavenworth for a while since they have a similar force structure, and we're hoping for us to do this in the future."

While 402nd MP I/R Bn. MPs and cooks worked at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks, engineers — including two plumbers, two electricians, two carpenters and an engineer officer — worked on installing two pedestrian and horse bridges for the Fort Leavenworth multi-use trail system.

Trail maintenance isn't assigned to any post entity and is a collective effort from the installation, volunteers and those using



Photo by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

**Precise Cut:** An engineer with the 402nd Military Police Internment/Resettlement Battalion cuts wood for a bridge on Fort Leavenworth's multiuse trail system, July 29. Seven engineers from the 402nd used their annual training to build two bridges and clean up the trails to make the multiuse trail system more useful.

the trails.

The trail system was revitalized last year when three volunteers took on advertising and maintaining it.

Their goal was to clean up the trail; make others aware of it, organize the installation of trail markers, install new pedestrian bridges and trailhead kiosks with maps



Photo by Sgt. Jason Drager

**Taking Shape:** Seven engineers with the Nebraska National Guard's 402nd Military Police Internment/Resettlement Battalion work on a bridge for Fort Leavenworth's multiuse trail system, July 29, at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. The trail system is used by walkers, runners, cyclists and horseback riders.

and guidelines, and to celebrate the completion with an opening ceremony and run in early spring or summer.

Three coordinators led volunteer days to clear brush grown on the trail path, put up trail markers and signage, and had a growing number of people using the trail. Since many volunteer coordinators moved on, little new work has been done on the trail system and growth from spring has taken over portions of the trail.

Maj. Kelly Pajak, the remaining lead trail coordination manager, said she's proud of the group's work over the last year.

"We spent a lot of time out there," Pajak said. "It was really good to be able to see people knowing where it was and being able to use it, which makes it harder now. When I got the

call that the engineers were coming, it's a small thing, but I can monopolize on it and get the information out there," Pajak said.

Engineers in the 402nd completed the 24-foot bridge and the 16-foot bridge that were purchased by Matt Nowak, forester with the Directorate of Public Works, a couple years ago using money awarded to the post by the National Environmental Education Foundation.

Nowak said without the bridges the area was hard to cross and that people had to go over a drainage area. He said the bridges will help prevent erosion of the land.

"For (the engineers) it's really good because it's meaningful (work)," Nowak said. "The worst thing they could do is go for two weeks and sit around and just have nothing mean-

ingful to do. Somebody might give you something to do but it might be something like painting rocks ... This for us is very important to get done. It has everything to do with the sustainability of our trails."

Using some of their own equipment and equipment from the 40th MP I/R Bn. and DPW, the engineers cleared the surrounding trail of brush and installed the bridges. This was the first time the unit built a bridge, but they have built similar structures.

Sgt. Zach Stika, a carpenter and masonry specialist with the 402nd MP I/R Bn., enjoyed the project, working with his hands and building things.

"When we were in Afghanistan, we did a lot of maintenance on the facility over there, and we actually built a lot of furniture," Stika said.

Sgt. Randy Robertson, an electrician in the 402nd MP I/R Bn., said that this was a good opportunity to work on something in their field and to have fun.

"I've learned a lot more on teamwork and just working with other people on their experiences and better ways to handle the situation," Robertson said.

Pajak said she is hoping this bridge project, along with advertising at Post Activities Information and Registration Day and recent interest by an Eagle Scout for a trail volunteer project will regenerate interest in using and volunteering on the trail system.

"It's going to take time from the volunteers," Pajak said. "Trail maintenance takes care of itself when people are on it but the problem is people don't go on it, because they don't know about it."



# Cornhusker Soldiers improve teamwork at mountain post

By Sgt. Heidi McClintock  
Staff Photojournalist

More than 600 Nebraska National Guard Soldiers from the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade traveled to Fort Carson, Colorado, July 12-26, for annual training.

Members of the 67th BfSB, 1167th Forward Support Company, 234th Signal Company, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron (Reconnaissance and Surveillance) and Companies B and C, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion took part in the brigade situational training exercise that was a large priority of the unit's annual training.

"The overall mission is to attend annual training at Fort Carson, Colorado, with the intent of improving the brigade staff through different exercises through the military decision making process," said Col. Kevin Lyons, 67th BfSB commander. "Also to allow the cavalry unit to participate in live fire and all their training requirements."

"It's a wide range of missions that we have been able to accomplish in a short period of time," added Lyons.

According to Soldiers of the 67th BfSB, it was a very productive AT where they got to really use their military occupational specialties.

"It's nice to contribute and see all our different jobs as an information technology specialist coming together during annual training," said Staff Sgt. James Engel, an information technology noncommissioned officer with the 67th BfSB. "It was nice to have the whole

(Tactical Operation Center) setup and see our number of network issues go down, which means all the hard work we put in work out well for us."

During the second week of annual training, the units really focused on the brigade situational training exercise.

"As part of the train-up toward deployment, we are getting the Soldiers used to maneuvering in larger and larger elements each year as we go along," said Capt. Andrew Iler, the 67th BfSB assistant plans officer. "Basically the scenario this year is we have part of the world that is a complex, ethnic and religious situation and the Soldiers are coming in to do stability operations."

"The training is geared toward the mission essential task list of each unit in which this case is reconnaissance," added Iler.

The opportunity to train with Soldiers from different units within the 67th BfSB helped the Soldiers grow as a team.

"We have a lot of new Soldiers since the last deployment, which is good because it keeps us fresh," said Iler. "It's good to build off that spirit of camaraderie because we had a lot of people that moved around."

Lyons agreed that the training was essential for everyone.

"It's a good training experience for all staff involved as well as the Soldiers in the field," said Lyons.

This year's annual training and situational training exercise was used in preparation for the unit's exportable combat training capability, or XCTC exercise, next year.



Photos by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

**Dust Devils:** Two Nebraska Army National Guard Chinooks from Company B, 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion, fly over Camp Red Devil at Fort Carson, Colo., to pick up Nebraska Soldiers and move them from one training site to the next on July 22. The mountainous Colorado terrain provided ample training opportunities for the pilots and crew chiefs of the Chinooks.



**Maintenance Check:** Spc. Brandon Lustrea, a wheeled vehicle mechanic with the 1167th Forward Support Company, fills a Humvee's transmission fluid before it goes back on the road on July 22 at Fort Carson, Colo. Lustrea noticed the transmission fluid was low during the preventive maintenance checks and services.



**Stacking Up:** Sgt. John Brandt, a power generation equipment repairer with the 1167th Forward Support Company, stacks flat racks with a fork lift during the unit's annual training, July 22, at Fort Carson, Colo. The 1167th mechanics provided support to the brigade equipment and vehicles during the annual training.



Photos by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

**Looking in The Distance:** Spc. Kodi Classen, Troop B, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron (Reconnaissance and Surveillance), looks for movement in a training village before his team moves into the military operations in urban terrain portion of a situational training exercise at Camp Red Devil on Fort Carson, Colo., July 21.



**Halt:** A Soldier from Troop B, 1-134th Cavalry Squadron (Reconnaissance and Surveillance), tells local villagers to stop and not come any closer during the 1-134th Cav's situational training exercise at Camp Red Devil on Fort Carson, Colo., July 21. The STX was the culminating event of the 1-134th Cav's annual training.

# Cavalry squadron gets back to basics during Fort Carson exercise

By Sgt. Jason Drager  
Staff Photojournalist

The 1-134th Cavalry Squadron held its annual training July 12 – 26, at Camp Red Devil, located at Fort Carson, Colorado.

The 134th Cav. took more than 250 Soldiers and over 90 vehicles to accomplish their mission. Accompanying them were more than 400 Soldiers in supporting roles from various units in Nebraska.

Movement to Fort Carson from Nebraska was a two-day process. Once they arrived, Troops A, B and C set up their respective sites in the hills of Camp Red Devil, with the Rocky Mountains in the background.

Throughout the two weeks the 134th Cav. accomplished many tasks and missions such as gunnery training, but the culminating event was a situational training exercise lasting more than 24 hours. The STX allowed the Guardsmen to get back to basics.

"It was a good, high-paced, and upbeat training," said Spc. Matthew Boelter, a cavalry scout with Troop B, 134th Cav. "We're not hanging around doing little tasks. We're actually getting out there, learning, and teaching the younger guys. We were doing things as a team."

The STX included long-range surveillance (LRS) conducted by scouts who were inserted in the middle of the night in the hills surrounding Camp Red Devil. The objective was to collect intelligence on routes, weapons and supplies associated with the enemy, and

had gained a foothold in the area and in a local village, said Capt. Kevin Janousek, 1-134th Cav. operations officer.

Throughout the exercise, opposing forces could be found in the village, providing the scouts as close to real-life scenarios as possible.

In addition to LRS, the 134th Cav. also conducted smaller missions in the village, which included building-clearing exercises and key leader engagements, said 1st Lt. Troy Severson, Troop A, 134th Cav. executive officer.

"This was really good training for the new guys who haven't done annual training with the Cav. before," said Boelter. "It gave them a taste of real-life Cav. missions you might see in Afghanistan. It also gave an opportunity for those who have deployed and have been in the Cav. for a while, to pass on their knowledge to the newer Soldiers."

The climate was another factor the Soldiers had to battle. With temperatures soaring into the upper 90s and 100s most days, staying properly hydrated was essential to avoid heat casualties. Rain was another issue. With the camp being at the bottom of hills and mountains, a hard rain meant flash flood warnings.

Overall, the training was a success. The Soldiers accomplished their missions and were highly motivated throughout their time at Camp Red Devil, said Severson.





# Guard Family NEWS

You Can Use



## Strong Bonds key to military readiness

Guardsmen from across nation learn to lead Strong Bonds courses

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
State Public Affairs Officer

If the past decade-plus has taught members of the National Guard anything, it's that the bonds forged between Soldiers and their families or significant others are extremely important in the overall success of a military mission.

Recently, chaplains, chaplain's assistants and spouses from 53 of the nation's 54 states and territories descended upon Nebraska's Camp Ashland for training on the Strong Bonds program.

According to Chaplain (Maj.) Scott Ehler, Nebraska Army National Guard chaplain, the goal of the four-day Strong Bonds Instructor course and day-and-half-long Strong Bonds Action Officer course was to give the various Guard leaders the tools they need to effectively lead Strong Bonds courses in their respective organizations.

"(The goal) of Strong Bonds is to teach Soldiers, families and couples the importance of communication, strong marriages and strong relationships," said Ehler.

That is particularly important in an era of changing missions, which in turn puts added stress onto Soldiers' relationships, said Chaplain (Capt.) Derek Boucher, Strong Bonds program manager for National Guard Bureau, which sponsored the Aug. 18-21 in-



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Strong Bonds:** Charlene Shields, a Strong Bonds instructor, and Chaplain (Capt.) Joel Heath, a chaplain with the Alaska National Guard, act out a telephone scenario at Camp Ashland, Neb., Aug. 22, during a training session on how to effectively lead Strong Bonds courses. Chaplains, chaplain's assistants and spouses from 53 of the nation's 54 states and territories came to Camp Ashland for the training.

structors course and Aug. 22-23 action officer course.

"I believe (the Strong Bonds course) is important because of the impact that the deployments have on our Soldiers and family members," he said. "Strong Bonds gives an opportunity to build resilience within their relationships, to give them a tool to help them in their relationships as they come back from deployments, as they come back from missions, and reunite with their families."

"The tools allow them to strengthen their marriages, build resiliency and be able to have a strong marriage," Boucher added.

Recently, Boucher said, it has been hard for Guard chaplains, assistants and volunteers to receive the training they need to remain certified to teach Strong Bonds courses. That's why National Guard Bureau chose to conduct the training at Camp Ashland.

"This is giving us the opportunity to get our chaplains, chaplain's as-

sistants and volunteers certified in two tracks of the course so that they can teach these tracks at future Strong Bonds events," he said.

According to [www.strong-bonds.org](http://www.strong-bonds.org), an Army website, Strong Bonds is a unit-based chaplain-led program designed to strengthen the Army family through relationship education and skills training. This training is typically conducted in off-site retreat format in order to "maximize the training effect" by creating a fun, safe and secure environment to address the impact of relocations, deployments and military lifestyle stressors.

Strong Bonds programs are also designed to assist single Soldiers with dealing with the stresses involved in balancing deployments and relationships.

To date, Boucher said, more than 12,000 Soldiers and family members have attended Strong Bonds events in 2014.

## Lakota pilot begins rebuilding following summer storms

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon  
Editor

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Boe Searight, an LUH-72 'Lakota' helicopter pilot with Company A, 1-376th Aviation Battalion, has been rather busy this summer.

In what seemed to be a reoccurring theme this spring and summer, severe weather ripped through northeast Nebraska affecting several small communities throughout the area.

Searight had been busy cleaning up from a storm that had produced enough hail to destroy several roofs and damage vehicles at the 40-acre farmstead six miles north of Stanton, Nebraska, he shares with his wife and three kids.

Then came July 16. Searight was at work as a conductor for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad when he had a brief work stoppage.

"I was at work. My wife and kids were at home...enjoying the summer," said Searight. "I went to check the weather for the train and I noticed a small cell around Norfolk and heard that hail was coming. And since we had such hail damage before I called home to get my wife, Melanie, to put our horse in the barn."

Once Melanie looked at the sky, she knew it was time to round up the kids and the dog and head toward the basement.

The next chance Searight had, 15 minutes later, he called home.

"She said, 'we're okay, but everything's gone,'" said Searight.

A severe storm had produced multiple tornadoes in the area basically destroying the property he had purchased in 2004, just two days before deploying to Iraq with the 1075th Transportation Company. That same storm produced twin tornadoes, one of which destroyed or damaged the majority of the nearby village of Pilger.

The family, thankfully, came

away unharmed, but the house was extensively damaged and the majority of the nine outbuildings were destroyed.

Although his possessions were destroyed or scattered around his property and miles around, Searight couldn't have been happier as he thought about what had happened.

"It was a long trip home, but at the same time, I'd never been happier," said Searight. "My family was okay."

"I told people it looks like a war zone, it's just not on fire," he added.

His employer allowed him to take as much time off as he needed to begin the clean up and rebuilding process. And almost immediately he was overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from local volunteers—but especially fellow Guardsmen he'd worked with throughout the years.

"It's pretty heartwarming," said Searight after nearly 30 fellow Soldiers showed up to help him and his family begin picking up the pieces.

"It's a culmination of so many years and different units - guys from Norfolk, Wayne, Columbus, guys drove from Wahoo. The friends we've made over the years in the Guard - I couldn't ask for anything better."

Searight said he took about a month off from work and stayed in a camper behind the heavily-damaged house while he worked to clean up. Melanie and the kids are staying in a nearby farmhouse for the time being. He said he relied heavily on local volunteers to help clean up and begin the rebuilding process.

The Searights used the insurance money to pay everything off and plan on rebuilding as they can afford it. They broke ground on a new house set back a bit further in what is left of the trees on the property on Aug. 13. He hopes the house will be completed by this coming Christmas.

Searight said they also learned their lesson from the slew of severe storms..the new house will have a basement and they are installing an additional storm cellar.

## Director of psychological health: Suicide result of no longer seeing in color

By Krystyn Schmidt  
Director of Psychological Health  
for the Nebraska Army National Guard

"No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world," said Robin Williams.

Whether it was William's suicide last month, your best friend 10 years ago, your mother or father, sister or brother, neighbor, confidant or your own thoughts of suicide, it affects us all in some form or fashion. Suicide is scary. It is dark, impactful and powerful. It can have devastating effects on loved ones, acquaintances and the survivors.

The reality is, suicide is a choice and so is stepping in and taking action to prevent it to help those who are suffering. Everyday people are suffering. Suffering because they don't fit in, they are being bullied, abused, struggling with addiction, heartache, mental health issues, medical concerns, relationship problems, homelessness and the list goes on and on.

So why do some consider suicide an option and others do not. My belief is they have lost their ability to see in color. Their decision making is black and white – the gray area has been removed and replaced with anguish, hopelessness and despair.

Sometimes we need a listening ear, a nudge, choices, options, a shoulder to lean on in order to see in color again; to see hope, change, hap-

### Know the warning signs:

- Social isolation
- Acting reckless or impulsive
- Have a suicide plan
- Feel trapped/desperate
- Relationship problems
- Disparaging phrases
- Sense of powerlessness
- See yourself as worthless or failure
- Write/talk about suicide/death/dying
- Tremendous feelings guilt or shame
- Setbacks or failures
- Feeling like a burden on others
- Hopelessness
- Depression
- Can't see a future without pain
- Insomnia
- History of abuse
- Intense anxiety/panic
- Feeling humiliated

### Know the risk factors:

- Major life transitions
- Serious medical problems
- Prolonged or overwhelming stress
- Legal problems
- Substance abuse
- Financial problems
- Firearms in the house
- Previous suicide/mental health
- Family history

### Where to call:

- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 (press 1)
- Crisis response line: 402-475-6695
- Director of Psychological Health: (ARNG) 402-309-7434 (ANG) 402-309-1698

### What actions to take:

- Don't leave them alone
- Take away lethal means (guns/knives)
- Tell them you are concerned
- Ask directly "are you thinking about killing yourself?"
- Do not try to talk someone out of suicide or argue with them; instead let them know you care, you are there, they are not alone and there is help out there
- Encourage professional help, give them options and choices
- Take them to a walk in clinic or the hospital
- The Army National Guard provides a program called Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and ACE (Ask, Care, Escort) for Guard members wanting to learn more suicide intervention. Contact Sgt. 1st Class Hatzenbuehler at 402-309-7343.

piness, evolvment, peace.

Wednesday, Sept. 10, is World Suicide Prevention Day. So often we become tied up in our own world we have forgotten how to communicate, how to feel and how to be social beings and instead have replaced it with medications, technology and avoidance.

Take some time this month to learn how

to help someone thinking of suicide, learn the risk factors and identify the red flags. Do things differently, look around you and listen to the people closest to you – what are they really saying? Although there are times of suffering and struggle, there are also times of hope, forgiveness, love and perseverance.

"The world is full of suffering; it is full also

of overcoming it." - Helen Keller.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 50-75 percent of all people who attempt suicide tell someone about their intention. Take the information below and use it, don't turn the other way. If you are thinking about suicide, ask for help. There is hope, don't give up the fight.



PROMOTIONS

Army National Guard  
Colonel

Curtis L. Abendroth

Lieutenant Colonel

Robert W. Ford Jr.

Major

Kevin L. Janousek  
William P. McGreer  
Kevin R. Reiners  
Jeremiah J. Szynskie

Captain

David C. Harper  
Michael A. Kilgore  
Amie D. Sughrue

Chief Warrant Officer Four

James M. Cameron II  
Matthew D. Greathouse  
Paul A. Robinson

Chief Warrant Officer Three

Michael E. Beraldi

Chief Warrant Officer Two

Troy A. Bear  
Hunter C. Isley  
Haley M. Markle

Sergeant First Class

Amber D. Engelman  
Jason A. McAtee  
James F. Roark  
Phillip E. Runyan II  
Brandon S. Yetter

Staff Sergeant

Adam M. Galvin  
Debra E. Hansel  
Chadwick J. Marksmeier  
Jeremy L. Nelson  
Brenton L. Prochaska  
Nicholas A. F. Sasada  
Alisha K. Welch

Sergeant

Connor H. Alberts  
Justin M. Beinlich  
Eric R. Davis  
Raymond M. Evans  
David A. Halstead  
David L. Hampton  
Adam T. Hill

Cody R. Keck  
Samantha J. Kraft  
Ashley L. Larrington  
Melissa D. Lohman  
Brianna N. Moss  
Lindsey B. Phinisey  
Ryan M. Polich  
John M. Rogers  
Casey J. Ryan  
Matthew E. Schorfheide  
Zachary A. Wickersham  
Trevor R. Wittrock

Specialist

Ethan E. Bergt  
Anthony M. Brickner  
Anthony M. Carter  
Kyle S. Coffey  
Everett L. Cuevas  
Alexander S. Fandrich  
Samantha M. Garcia  
Austin P. Gothier  
Samuel P. Hansen  
Jacob C. Hartwig  
Seth M. Hendrickson  
Benjamin D. Jacobs  
Trezza J. Kount  
Tara B. Lewis  
Bema K. H. Male  
Jesse D. S. McMorris  
Abigail T. Reagers  
Arturo J. Romero  
Mick L. Shaw  
Robert A. Smith  
Tucker J. Spellman  
Kevin M. Szalawiga  
Brandon L. Trueblood  
Lance W. Vakoc  
Jonathan R. Watson  
Mark A. Wenzl  
Cody J. Winslow

Private First Class

Alec G. Applegate  
Trevor A. Bartunek  
Jay G. Bicking  
Richard J. Burtwistle  
Samantha I. Cardenas  
Michael C. Fischer  
Branden A. Gabel  
Whisper M. Harris  
Joshua S. Johnston  
Kurtis K. Kirkendall  
Shane E. Kuntz  
Randall F. Lucas Jr.

Tyler G. Nickel  
Christopher Quintana  
Danial E. Rentschler  
Kristin K. Servance  
Chasen J. Welch

Private Two

Derek D. Hedlund  
Michael J. Henn  
Gregory A. Neff II  
Marissa N. Sedam  
Trent J. Volenec  
Braxton M. Wright

Air National Guard

Senior Master Sergeant

Paul J. Sabatka

Master Sergeant

Lucas M. Brown  
Joshua G. Sears

Technical Sergeant

Benjamin I. Beermann  
Bryan J. Hansen  
Chaz R. Jensby  
Brandy L. Myers  
Katherine M. Roewert

Staff Sergeant

Megan L. Beacom  
Brady W. Bouc  
Samuel A. Brooks  
Michael J. Budke

Cody C. Carlow  
Daniel J. Dibbern  
Casey C. Lewis  
Kishan B. Manning  
Caleb T. McLeod  
Joel B. Vaughn  
Cody N. D. Williamson

Senior Airman

Joseph A. Aulner  
Dylan S. Exstrom  
Japheth J. Hartmann  
Brandon A. McClintock  
Joseph A. Metzger  
Matthew C. Mohatt

Jordan A. Perkins  
Matthew J. Riley  
Noelle A. Robbins  
Mattie M. Schake  
Brett F. Schutte  
James D. Witter

Airman First Class

Tyler C. Coleman  
Conner J. Comstock  
Morgan R. Hurley  
Shyanna E. Schaaaf  
Nolan R. Siemonsma  
Tanner J. Winberg

AWARDS

Army National Guard  
Meritorious Service Medal

Maj. James R. Hewitt  
Capt. Zachary V. Labrayere  
Master Sgt. Larry W. Martin Jr.  
Sgt. 1st Class Sylvia R. Bastian  
Sgt. 1st Class Timothy S. James  
Sgt. Dustin R. Morris

Army Commendation Medal

Maj. Fletcher J. Shires  
1st Lt. Jennifer M. Myers  
1st Lt. Jessica L. Wolff  
Sgt. 1st Class Gregory A. Brown  
Sgt. 1st Class James R. Bussen  
Sgt. 1st Class Anthoney J. Jensen  
Sgt. 1st Class Vincent E. Luhn  
Staff Sgt. Ryan A. Zulkoski  
Sgt. Cameron J. Searcey  
Sgt. Brent R. Searcey  
Spc. Jim J. Stiles

Combat Action Badge

Spc. Jim J. Stiles

Army Achievement Medal

1st Lt. Matthew T. Broman  
1st Lt. Jennifer M. Myers  
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nicholas S. Richardson  
Sgt. 1st Class Heather R. Davey  
Sgt. 1st Class Gary M. Jacobsen  
Sgt. 1st Class Steven A. Jenny  
Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey S. Rexus

Sgt. 1st Class David M. Wooten  
Staff Sgt. Klyde D. Demaree  
Staff Sgt. Derek S. Fryer  
Staff Sgt. Cody K. Green  
Staff Sgt. Nicholas J. Mosel  
Staff Sgt. Brett R. Seifert  
Staff Sgt. Sarah J. Sturges  
Sgt. Jacob R. Berry  
Sgt. James A. Carlson  
Sgt. Jared T. Cornell  
Sgt. Corey C. Handley  
Sgt. James S. Morphey  
Sgt. Westley P. Negley  
Sgt. Carl J. Nolte  
Sgt. Chad C. Oestreich  
Sgt. Michael L. Olberding  
Sgt. Bubba L. Page  
Sgt. Tyler D. Petty  
Sgt. Joseph R. Pollock  
Sgt. Carmen M. Ruiz  
Sgt. Chad C. Schultz  
Sgt. Timothy A. Smallcomb  
Sgt. James R. Stapleton  
Sgt. Tonjaih A. Thomas  
Sgt. Charles M. Wilkins  
Sgt. Megan W. Yada  
Spc. Nathan D. Fielder  
Spc. Brennan C. Frerichs  
Spc. Tyler R. Hightree  
Spc. Eric M. Holmes  
Spc. Jordan T. Hopwood  
Spc. Christopher L. Preiser  
Spc. Rebecca E. Spurgeon

Spc. Christopher W. Suttles  
Spc. James W. Taylor  
Pfc. Jose L. Audelorios  
Pfc. Stephen M. Cornell  
Pvt. Alexander S. P. Gould

Nebraska National Guard  
Commendation Medal

2nd Lt. Jeffrey G. Salee  
Sgt. Manuel S. Molina

Nebraska National Guard I  
ndividual Achievement Medal

Master Sgt. Eric E. Pearson  
Sgt. 1st Class Lacey J. Kollath  
Sgt. 1st Class Casey A. Loomis  
Staff Sgt. William R. Bane  
Staff Sgt. Timothy J. Brewer  
Staff Sgt. Brian J. Campbell  
Staff Sgt. Timothy A. Cusatis Jr.  
Staff Sgt. Alisha S. Kelly  
Staff Sgt. Chadwick J. Marksmeier  
Staff Sgt. Brian L. Mueller  
Staff Sgt. Chad M. Pokorney  
Staff Sgt. Robert E. Sherard Jr.  
Sgt. Brady V. Anderson  
Sgt. Eric M. Becker  
Sgt. Scott W. Chase  
Sgt. Matthew R. Fiedler  
Sgt. David K. Gangwish  
Sgt. Brison G. Kuhn  
Sgt. Patricia H. Lee  
Sgt. Brady J. Masters

Sgt. Christopher L. Miller  
Sgt. Ellen M. Ross  
Sgt. Matthew E. Schorfheide  
Spc. Shavin N. Barnhart  
Spc. Neil J. Boston  
Spc. Aaron J. Collins  
Spc. Daniel A. Holguinsanchez  
Spc. Sean R. Howard  
Spc. Ryan J. Linder  
Spc. Sheldon L. Onderstal  
Spc. Ryan S. Rodehorst  
Pfc. Caleb A. Dewey  
Pfc. Nolan L. Haywood  
Pvt. Tyler J. Rasmussen

RETIREMENTS

Army National Guard

Col. Daniel A. Kenkel  
Capt. Daniel S. Hromas  
Chief Warrant Officer Five Thomas W. Cerny  
Chief Warrant Officer Five Robert E. Hansel  
Chief Warrant Officer Four Randall D. Schlensig  
Sgt. 1st Class Christopher G. G. Cox  
Sgt. 1st Class Steven M. Swisher  
Staff Sgt. Gregg V. Hochderffer

Shorttakes

Nebraska Air Guard recruiter visits every Nebraska high school...almost

By 1st Lt. Alex Salmon  
Editor

Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Dean had a mission – a mission to visit every high school in the state of Nebraska and provide them with information about the Nebraska Air National Guard.

Dean, a production recruiter who now works out of the Omaha Storefront Career Center, visited 300 Nebraska high schools from Oct. 31, 2013 to May 22, 2014. A great accomplishment no doubt. But there are 301 high schools in Nebraska, which gave Dean a 99.7 percent rate.

His idea for the mission was simple – 75 percent of the schools he visited hadn’t been visited in the last four years.

“I realized when I went to some of these smaller schools that they had no information whatsoever,” said Dean, a 14-year Air Guard member serving the last eight years as a recruiter. “When a school had 10 kids in their senior class, when they went to get their military options it would be active duty Air Force or Army Guard – that was it.”

“I said ‘what if I could get a box of our information – brochures and cards – to every single high school?,’” said Dean. “That way every high school kid has the ability to grab one of our brochures and has the opportunity to enlist with us.”

Dean said he wanted to show kids, whether in a small town or big city, the options the Nebraska Air National Guard offered.

“I came from a small school – we had 18 seniors – and what I remember was there was only one recruiter that came to our school,” said Dean. “So if the students never have the



Dean

option, how do we know if someone wants to go into the military that they picked the best option for themselves if they only had one choice.”

“If they have all the choices out there they can pick the best one for them,” he added.

Dean said he provided schools with brochures and information and tried to spend time with as many school counselors as possible because they serve as advocates when a student is considering joining the military.

He added it simply boils down to giving the kids the option of the Nebraska Air National Guard because it may be the best fit.

“I encourage everyone I talk to, to check out all the branches because we’re not here just to get someone in,” said Dean. “We want to make sure it’s the best fit for them. Hopefully in the long run that pans out for us when they’ll want to stay and it makes our job easier if we do it right from the beginning.”

Dean kept detailed statistics of his quest and the numbers are impressive.

He drove a total of 9,984 miles with December 2013 being the highest month with 1,956 miles. He took 26 trips, some lasting one day while others were overnight or longer. During those trips he visited a high of 15 schools in a single day but averaged just fewer than 12 schools per trip.

And possibly most impressively, Dean’s efforts meant he potentially reached 85,000 high school students.

As impressive as his statistics are, especially of 300 or 301 schools, most people can’t help but think, “what about that last school?”

“They focused more on that one school than the accomplishment of the 300,” said Dean.

For the record, Dean said, he was actually at that last small school in Northeast Nebraska, but they were closed unexpectedly.

He plans to visit the school as soon as possible.

Although this particular mission for Dean is over, his job as a recruiter never is.

“I think it’s important to keep the word of the Air National Guard always circulating around,” said Dean. “Because as soon as we stop going to schools and talking to young kids, that’s when people outside of Lincoln and Omaha stop knowing who we are.”

Bohac dunked for good cause



Photo by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

**Fastball:** Sgt. James Rasmussen, a program analyst with Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb., attempts to dunk Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, in the dunk tank during the State Charitable Giving Campaign, Aug. 28, in Lincoln, Neb. A crowd of Nebraska Military Department employees surrounded the dunk booth area to watch the adjutant general get dunked to help raise money for charitable organizations.



Photo by Sgt. Heidi McClintock

Troop Command marks birthday

In celebration of 92nd Troop Command’s 20th birthday, Troop Command Guardsmen held a family picnic at University Place Park in Lincoln, Nebraska, during the unit’s drill, July 13. During the celebration, they presented awards, had lunch, snow cones, popcorn and activities for the Soldiers and their families. They also celebrated with the cutting of a birthday cake by Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Stanislav, the oldest member, and Spc. Helen Juelfs, the youngest member of Troop Command.



# Street Talk

"What is the most important skill you've learned by being a member of the Nebraska National Guard?"



**Spc. Jon Steager**  
1075th Transportation Company

*"It made me a better and stronger person overall. Before, I wasn't the best person to be around - the Army straightened me out."*

**Sgt. Derrick Jackson**  
1075th Transportation Company

*"The ability to adapt and overcome and being able to work with people from different backgrounds, from basic training to going overseas. Everyone has a different mindset on how to do things."*



**Airman 1st Class Ryne Packett**  
155th Civil Engineer Squadron

*"The hazmat and CBRNE side of emergency management. It was eye-opening and scary at the same time."*



**Pfc. Justin Metcalf**  
Company A,  
1-376th Aviation Battalion

*"I like to work on my own. I've had to learn a lot about teamwork in the National Guard because you can't accomplish as much by yourself as you can as a team."*



**Tech. Sgt. Scott Sokolik**  
155th Maintenance Squadron

*"I like being in the National Guard because I get to work around aircraft and I get to travel around the world and help places I normally wouldn't have the opportunity to."*



**Spc. Bryan Stroyek**  
Troop B, 1-134th Cavalry

*"Learning to work as a team and putting the needs of the Army above your own."*



## Adjutant General: I'm fiercely proud

By the time this edition of the *Prairie Soldier* is published, I will have been on the job as your Adjutant General for over one year.

That means I can no longer claim rookie status!

I take fierce pride in who we are and what we accomplish in the Nebraska National Guard and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. We provide an incredible array of capability and capacity to the citizens of our state and nation. It is hard to imagine another group that can deliver so much, so readily and so well!

There are two objects in my office that help guide me in my job. The first is a nutcracker in the form of a guitar playing rock star. The nutcracker was presented to me by a staff officer who overheard me respond to a young Airman's question, "Why do you have a star in your signature?" My immodest response was, "Cuz I'm a rock star

that's why, just ask me!" I was a Colonel at the time with no stars on my uniform. I arrived at the office the next day to find a rock star nutcracker on my desk.

I use it as a reminder to be careful what you say and where you say it. You never know when it will come back to haunt you!

The other object in my office is a license plate from the Nebraska Department of Corrections with my name on it and a picture of the state penitentiary in the background. That sits on my desk for me to see every time I walk in and it reminds me I am one bad decision away from being a guest of the state.

Notice I didn't say wrong deci-

*"Here To Serve"*

The Adjutant General

**Daryl Bohac**



sion? You can make an error and as long as you own it, it's not a mistake. Only when you deny the error and fail to correct it does it become a mistake; a mistake which can become a bad decision that can have serious consequences.

Those objects help

remind me of what my job is about: serving the men and women and their families of the Nebraska Military Department. I am driven each day to help all of us do what we could not imagine possible and to create opportunities for each member to become someone they didn't know was possible.

I hope you share the same fierce pride in who we are and what we do. I hope you are driven to give your absolute best to your fellow citizens.

As I travel the state, your efforts are felt in all the communities as reflected by the comments of every civic leader I meet who, without fail, express gratitude and pride in all of you.

Thanks for what you do!

## Robin Williams made lasting impact

*"No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world."*

— **Robin Williams**  
(brainyquote.com)

In all my years of writing columns, I'm not sure that I've ever written one about the passing of a famous actor. That was, until now.

When I first heard that Robin Williams had died on Aug. 14 after a severe battle with depression, I felt as though someone had punched me straight to the chest as the news of his tragic and deeply saddening passing sunk into my subconscious.

Later, as my wife and I began to talk about Williams and all of the incredibly amazing movies, shows and performances that he had created over the course of his life, one of my sons asked two simple, yet profound questions: "What's the big deal? He was just an actor?"

"Just an actor?" I found myself wanting to shout back. "Just an actor? This was Robin Williams... he was anything but, 'Just an actor.'"

But as I began to think about it, I, too, wondered, what exactly was the big deal? Why should I care one way or another if an actor died?

I'm still not sure that I know the answer. All that I can answer is, for whatever reason, Robin Williams represented something to me.

Let me explain.

When Williams first burst onto the national scene in the mid/late 1970s on *Happy Days* and then *Mork and Mindy*, I was roughly 10 or 11 years old. As most understand, those are significant and defining years in a person's life as one begins to gain conscious understanding of who he or she is and the hopes and dreams of what one wants to achieve become defined.

Watching Williams perform the many characters that he seemingly created out of thin air was incredibly mesmerizing. In a way, Williams seemed to demonstrate that it was okay to be silly, to be willing to look foolish so as to make others laugh... that it was okay to be oneself.

These feelings seemed to be reinforced the next day on the school yards when many of my friends would gather and repeat the lines that we had heard the night before to the laughter of all present. Now, this may be hard to understand in today's mass media world with hundreds of channels to choose from, but in the 1970s and 1980s, especially in rural northeastern Nebraska, if you watched something on TV at night, there was a pretty good chance that a significant portion of your friends had watched the same thing.

*My Turn*

State Public Affairs Officer

**Kevin J. Hynes**



really was 'just an actor.' But, for my money, Williams did it way better than most.

Since Williams' death, many writers and commentators have talked in remembrance of Williams' unique ability to capture various characters

in an electric and eclectic rapid fire manner. And without a doubt, that was one of Williams' unique gifts.

But what I will remember most was his ability to bring the human element to each of his characters... characters that were able to, flaws and all, find ways to find and do something truly good for others, often at the expense of his own reputation.

Yes, Williams battled with demons throughout his life, many of them well publicized, many not. But I don't see these as detractors... but rather as adding to the depth of what he was able to bring to the stage and screen.

In the days that followed Williams' suicide, I had the opportunity to look at numerous photos of friends posing with Williams during his many trips overseas to entertain American service members through his work with the USO. I really envy those friends because I never got the chance to meet Williams.

Today, I still wonder how I would've handled such a meeting. Would I have told him thanks for the gifts he gave through his movies, or the laughter that he brought to me and so many like me? Or would I have been completely star-struck, unable to put my feelings into words.

But even though I never had the chance to actually meet him, I still mourn him just the same for all that he did, all that he symbolized and all that he left behind.

Since Williams' death, much has been spoken about the problems of mental illness and suicides. These are all incredibly important subjects that deserve and require more dialogue and understanding if we as a society are truly to help those who continue to struggle with them. In a way, that may also become part of Williams' enduring legacy. Perhaps he will be remembered for helping push this dialogue and helping us find ways to better treat them. If that's the case, that will indeed be a good thing.

For me though, I think what I will always and forever remember Williams for is the incredible sense of humanity that he brought to every single thing he did.

And for that, I will always be grateful.



# Nebraska Regional Training Institute graduates new officers

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
State Public Affairs Officer

Twelve Nebraska Soldiers stepped into a new world of responsibilities, Aug. 9, when they graduated from Officer Candidate School at Camp Ashland, Nebraska.

The Soldiers, who represented units from across the state, consisted of nine members of Officer Candidate Class 57 – the traditional, 17 months of training conducted primarily at Camp Ashland with two, two-week sessions at Salina, Kansas, and Joint Base Lewis, Washington – and three members of the 2014 Accelerated Officer Candidate Class conducted over two months at Fort Meade, South Dakota.

According to a former commander of the 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), the graduating Soldiers all have much to be proud of as they move on into positions of greater authority and responsibility.

“You’ve worked together as a team and you’ve grown together. I think that says a lot about what this program does,” said Col. Mark Stockstell, former commander of the Camp Ashland educational regiment who administers the OCS program.

“I know that what you’ve been through will help you make your dream come true.”

Stockstell, who is retiring later this year, added some advice to his graduation address.

“As an officer, you are going to be accountable to Soldiers and you have a large task that you’ve been challenged with,” said Stockstell. “You will be empowered to make decisions that affect training and readiness; on the personnel

*“As officers or as (noncommissioned officers) we know that we have to lead by example. We have to be up front as people they can look to with a little higher expectation.”*

— Col. Mark Stockstell  
Former commander of Camp Ashland Educational Regiment



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Taking The Oath:** Members of Officer Candidate Class 57 and the 2014 Accelerated Officer Candidate Class take the oath of office of a second lieutenant in the Nebraska Army National Guard from Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, during the graduation ceremony conducted at Camp Ashland, Neb., on Aug. 9. The new officers will all be going on to serve in leadership roles in Nebraska Army National Guard units located across the state.

side, promotions of Soldiers; and you’re going to be assessing risks and making those types of decisions that affect your team.”

“As officers or as (noncommissioned officers) we know that we have to lead by example. We have to be up front as people they can look to with a little higher expectation,” Stockstell added. “Always lead by example.”

Stockstell also encouraged the new graduates to continue to seek out educational opportunities for both themselves and the Soldiers they lead, to balance risks and opportunities, and to empower their subordi-



**Big Moment:** Jeffrey Salee receives his new gold bars of a second lieutenant from his mother, Cyndy Stevenson, and sister, Caressa Salee. Salee is moving on to serve as a platoon leader with Troop A, 1-134th Cavalry

nates, which in turn will make their teams much more capable. Finally, Stockstell said, it is important to remember to have fun.

According to newly graduated

2nd Lt. Cory Hicks, president of OC Class 57, he and his fellow candidates feel prepared to make the next step in their military careers, even though there were times when

each started “to doubt what they were doing.”

“You have developed us into the leaders that we are today,” said Hicks to the OCS staff. “Through your countless lessons and instructions we have learned the basic Soldiering skills that we need to succeed. You took remedial tasks –like polishing water spots off of brass – and made us learn the more important lessons behind them. Our class strove to be the best Soldiers possible and to lead through your example.”

Jeffrey Salee was named Class 57’s distinguished graduate. He also earned the class physical fitness award and academic excellence award. This year’s leadership award went to Cassandra Day, who also was named the second honor graduate. Finally, Jason Black was named the class’ third honor graduate.

Three Soldiers graduated from the 2014 Accelerated Officer Candidate Class approximately two weeks earlier during a ceremony held in front of Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, served as the keynote speaker for that ceremony.

## Camp Ashland 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) adds three to Hall of Fame

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
State Public Affairs Officer

Along with graduating 12 Soldiers from Officer Candidate School, the Nebraska National Guard’s 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) also inducted three new members into the organization’s Hall of Fame, Aug. 9.

The Nebraska Regional Training Institute Hall of Fame was established to honor former staff members, graduates of the Officer Candidate or Warrant Officer Candidate Schools, or those who through their contributions or achievements have brought great credit to the RTI and the Nebraska National Guard.

Inducted in this year’s class were retired Master Sgt. Janice Hendrix, retired 1st Sgt. James Marx and retired Col. Michael Deger.

The following narrations were read during the unveiling of the plaques that will now hang in Camp Ashland’s venerable Memorial Hall.

**Retired Master Sgt. Janice Hendrix**

“(Master Sgt.) Hendrix worked tirelessly in multiple key areas to develop the 209th Regional Training Institute, Noncommissioned Officer Education System,

the 88M Transition Course, and guide the 209th Regiment through substantial changes in accreditation standards.”

“She was a key leader in the transition of the 209th Regiment from generic accreditation standards to the Training and Doctrine Command accreditation standards. Not only did (she) guide the 209th through the dramatic change in accreditation process, she was also recognized as the subject matter expert (SME). Her continued oversight ensured the success of the 3rd Battalion and its three functionally aligned transportation companies in Iowa, Wisconsin, and South Dakota.”

“She also played an integral role in preparing the 196th RTI in South Dakota to achieve the TRADOC Institution of Excellence rating.”

**Retired 1st Sgt. James Marx**

“As a squad instructor, drill sergeant, operations sergeant and branch chief, 1st Sgt. Marx provided purpose, direction and motivation for thousands of young Soldiers attending the Officer Candidate Course. He was instrumental in the transition of the Regional Training Institute from Region IV Noncommissioned Officers Academy to the 209th Regiment.”

“He was crucial in the transition of the Primary Leadership Development Course to the Warrior

Leader Course. (He) was also key in supporting expanded operations, including the 209th Regiment providing training to foreign troops in Sinai, Egypt.”

“Under his leadership, 64 Soldiers assigned to the Multi-National Forces were trained, and groundwork was laid to continue supporting overseas and CONUS MTT training operation.”

**Retired Col. Michael Deger**

“As a former company, battalion, and brigade commander, Col. Deger referred countless Soldiers to the 209th Regional Training Institute (RTI) for Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES), Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS), and Officer Candidate School (OCS).”

“His efforts have had and will continue to have a lasting impact on the 209th RTI and the Nebraska Army National Guard. After graduating from the OCS Class 30 program he served as an OCS Teach, Advise, and Counsel (TAC) Officer. In addition he served as the training officer for the Nebraska National Guard Military Academy and the 209th RTI.”

“He oversaw the reorganization of the Nebraska National Guard Military Academy and the Regional Noncommissioned Officer Academy into a single organization.”



Photos by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Honored:** Retired Master Sgt. Janice Hendrix receives her medal and plaque as a new member of the Camp Ashland Hall of Fame from Col. Curtis Abendroth, commander of the 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute).



**Honored:** Retired 1st Sgt. James Marx receives his medal and plaque as a new member of the Camp Ashland Hall of Fame from Col. Curtis Abendroth, commander of the 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute).





Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**All Together Now:** Members of the current Warrant Officer Candidate School at Camp Ashland work together to repair the fence at the Mead, Neb., baseball field during the Soldiers' community service project, Aug. 9.

# Paying it forward

## Warrant officer candidates repair small town ballfield during community project

By Maj. Kevin Hynes  
State Public Affairs Officer

As athletes using the baseball field in Mead, Nebraska, will have a little better experience next year, thanks to the combined efforts of six Soldiers attending the Camp Ashland-based Warrant Officer Candidate School.

The warrant officer candidates – better known by the acronym WOCs – spent a day in early August making repairs to the southeastern Nebraska village's ballpark and nearby recreational equipment as part of their graduation requirements from the six-month course.

According to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Russell Eddy, a Teach, Assess and Counsel (TAC) officer for the Warrant Officer Candidate School, each class must plan and complete a community service project before graduating from the course. Beside some preliminary guidance, the entire project is the complete responsibility of the WOCs.

In this case, that responsibility fell squarely on the shoulders of Warrant Officer Candidate Jacob Kohlman who, prior to enrolling in the program, served as a fire support noncommissioned officer with the Lincoln-based 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade. Kohlman is hoping to one day become a helicopter pilot.

According to Kohlman, past WOC classes had focused their efforts primarily in the Ashland, Nebraska, area, tackling such proj-

ects as setting up playground equipment in a park or painting park benches along the main street.

"We wanted to branch out," said Kohlman. "We wanted to touch other communities."

Kohlman, who was assigned as project officer for the effort, initially contacted Gretna and Mead, both of which are less than 20 minutes from the Guard camp near Ashland. The first one to respond was Mead, said Kohlman.

The Mead project consisted of reinstalling fencing at the town ballpark that had by weathered by past winter storms, as well as painting such things as the dugouts and homeplate backstop and several picnic areas.

On Aug. 9 the Soldiers – dressed in their near-neon orange class uniforms – descended on the Mead ballpark and completed the project. According to Kohlman, the effort was a good change from the normal classroom types of activities of Warrant Officer Candidate School.

"It's been great to get outside and spend some time doing a great public service project while also taking all of those lessons they've been trying to teach us at Camp Ashland and applying them here," he said.

"Plus it's really good to be able to come out to a town like Mead and help them out," he added. "Our communities have really supported the military over the past few years. This is a great chance for us to give back and show that we appreciate what they've done for us."

## AIR GUARD continued from page 1.

and commitment to excellence is second to none. The 110 percent that you give is simply phenomenal," said Schell, who commanded the 155th ARW since June 2012. "Each and every one of you, on your own free will, signed up to be part of the military. And because of the military, we live in a land where we are free... this is what makes me the most proud of all of you, ensuring that every American lives a free life, so thank you."

After assuming command, Stevenson said he was ready for the challenge.

"Commanding one of 250 or so, wings of the United States Air Force is a prestigious honor, a humbling and sublime moment for my family and I as I stand before you to become the 10th commander of this organization in its 68-year history," said Stevenson. "What an honor to lead such an incredibly talented group of men and women."

Stevenson also spoke about the importance of the wing's mission.

"As a wing our total force contribution is the ability to provide our national command authorities and the president of the United States options for lethal combat capability when and where needed at a highly-efficient price to the U.S. taxpayer; fueled by Citizen Airmen in a community-based wing," said Stevenson. "Also, we stand immediately ready to provide

significant support in trained resources to the governor of this state when our fellow citizens are in times of emergency. It is the best of both worlds."

Stevenson finished by addressing the wing and setting expectations for the future.

"You are Citizen Airmen, dedicated professionals; you are part of the greatest Air Force ever assembled on this planet," said Stevenson. "You have chosen a life of consequence and given your life to something larger than yourself."

"Together we will work to solve problems. We will become more efficient, we will work to get to 'yes.' We will collaborate, we will innovate, we will take managed risks. We will leave any inspector and every person we encounter deployed, saying, 'those guys are from Nebraska, they do it right.'"

"There is more work to be done," said Stevenson. "I look forward to taking it on with you, so let's go."

Stevenson graduated from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, and received his commission through Officer Training School in 1989. He has been a member of the Nebraska Air National Guard since 1997, where he has commanded the 155th Operations Group and the 170th Group at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, Nebraska.



Photo by Staff Sgt. James Lieth

**Top Brass:** (From left) Brig. Gen. Jon Fago, assistant adjutant general-Air, Col. James "Bob" Stevenson, incoming 155th Air Refueling Wing commander, and Col. Keith Schell, outgoing commander, stand at attention during a change of command ceremony at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 2. Stevenson assumed command becoming the wing's 10th commander after replacing Schell, who had commanded the wing since June 2012.

## Close to an age milestone? Don't forget to explore all your options

As always, we remain committed to supporting retirees and surviving spouses of retirees concerning retirement issues. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need assistance. We'll get you to the right person to help you! If you want specific information on any retirement issue, please contact us and we'll do the research for you. Our contact numbers are (402)-309-7303 or (402)-309-7305.

Are you reaching age 60 or 65? Have you updated your ID card? Remember, you need to get your Blue Retiree ID card when you turn age 60 and then again at Age 65 when you become Medicare eligible. ID locations are listed in this column. Please, do not delay when it comes time to renew. Remember, your ID card is your access to Tri-Care and Tri-Care for Life (TFL).

For updates and relevant information concerning retirement issues, go to [www.neguard.org](http://www.neguard.org) and click on the retiree site. The latest article we posted is a Defense Health Agency (DHA) brochure which explains TRICARE options for Guard and Reserve members, including retirees.

The Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs website is at <http://www.veterans.nebraska.gov/>.

Visit the site to find out what's

## Nebraska National Guard Retiree News & Notes

By retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 William Nelson

happening with veterans affairs in Nebraska. It also provides links to many other sites of interest. For instance, have you retired within the last two years? Due to a recent law, retirees who have retired within the last two years can elect to exempt a portion of their state income tax. Visit the website for more information on how to apply.

Thank you for your dedicated military service. The U.S. Army has recently adopted a motto, "Once a Soldier, always a Soldier." This applies to everyone – "Once a service member, always a service member." Be proud of your time in uniform.

Do you have suggestions on what you want to see addressed in this column? Please let us know and we'll include information you feel is vitally important. Thank you.

If you like to rise early to meet fellow retirees and share stories, here's

the breakfast site information for those in the immediate areas:

Lincoln:

Army National Guard retirees: **FIRST** Monday of each month, 7 a.m., Virginia's Travelers Café, 3820 Cornhusker Highway, Lincoln.

Air National Guard retirees: **LAST** Monday of each month, 7 a.m., Stauffer's Café, 5600 S. 48th St, Lincoln

North Platte area retirees:

**SECOND** Saturday of each month, 8 a.m., Airport Inn, North Platte

If any other towns have retiree breakfasts and want to share that information, please let us know and we'll add you to the list so others can join you.

Finally, welcome Sgt. 1st Class Ed Luhn and Sgt. Craig Hoppes to the Army Guard Retirement Services office in the Joint Force Headquarters building. They will

## DEERS/ID Card Stations

- G1 – 2433 N.W. 24th Street, Lincoln, NE 68524: (402) 309-8167/8168/8169;
- "Spirit of 1776" Armory 1776 N. 10th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 (402) 309-7359/7373;
- Penterman Armory at the Nebraska National Guard air base in Lincoln (402) 309-1724/1719;
- Air Guard (Lincoln Air Base) Bldg 600 Room E209: (402) 309-1542;
- Norfolk Armory 817 S. 1st St. Norfolk, NE 68701 (402) 309-8900/8908;

- Kearney Armory 5710 Airport Road Kearney: (402) 309-7758/7752;
- 209th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), 220 County Road A, Bldg. 508, Ashland, NE 68003, (402) 309-7809/7628;
- Offutt Air Force Base: (402) 294-2374;
- The number for DEERS is 1-800-538-9552.

Remember, you need two forms of ID when you arrive for your appointment.

continue their dedicated support to our retirees.

**From the desk of Sgt. 1st Class Ed Luhn.** Greetings, retirees. I am the new Retirement Services noncommissioned officer, replacing Sgt. 1st Class Bonnie Frazier, who has retired and joined your ranks. I am looking forward to my new position. Feel free to call me with any questions you and your spouse may have. My phone number is (402) 309-8162 and email address is [Vincent.e.luhn@mail.mil](mailto:Vincent.e.luhn@mail.mil). My new assistant

is Sgt. Craig Hoppes, who may be reached at (402) 309-8159 or [craig.d.hoppes@mail.mil](mailto:craig.d.hoppes@mail.mil). We are located in the Joint Force Headquarters Building at the Nebraska National Guard air base, 2433 NW 24th St, Lincoln, NE 68524.

Your Tri-Care manager is Staff Sgt. Travis Garrett and he may be reached at (402) 309-1541 or [travis.s.garrett@mail.mil](mailto:travis.s.garrett@mail.mil). Contact him for all your Tri-Care related questions. The United Health Care for Military and Veterans phone number is 1-877-988-9378.





Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Crowded Runway:** Runners take to the tarmac during the annual KFOR/National Guard Thunder Run 5-kilometer race at the Lincoln Airport and Nebraska National Guard air base Aug. 9. More than 430 runners of all ages participated in a one-mile or 5-kilometer run.

# Hundreds take in air base view during annual mile, 5-K races

By Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton  
Staff Writer

Unseasonably mild summer temperatures held true for the annual KFOR/National Guard Thunder Run Aug. 9, at the Lincoln Airport making for ideal running conditions for this year's participants.

More than 430 runners took to the fast, flat, out-and-back course on the west ramp of the airport, participating in either a one-mile children's run or a 5-kilometer run.

"The weather was perfect," said Garrett Kenyon, the 20-year-old runner who placed first in the 5-kilometer run. "It was ideal for running – nice and cool and the humidity was not too high. I couldn't have asked for better conditions."

Kenyon, an Omaha native and student at Creighton University, finished with a time of 15 minutes, 20 seconds. Fellow Omaha native, Thomas York, 26, finished 14 seconds later. This was Kenyon's first Thunder Run experience and he



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Morale Support:** One of the youngest runners holds her teddy bear as she finishes the one-mile race of the annual KFOR/National Guard Thunder Run at the Lincoln Airport and Nebraska National Guard air base, Aug. 9.

said he was happy with his time considering he had just come off a month of downtime.

Finishing first in the women's division and 37th overall was 25-year-old Hayley Sutter of Lincoln with a time of 18:21. Finishing in second place with a time of 18:33 was 27-year-old Megan Zavorka Thomas.

"I am really happy with my performance today," said Sutter. "I was nervous coming into it... I had a tough week of work and had to run pretty late last night, so I was just hoping to come out and have a good time."

She said the race was one of the USA Track & Field Nebraska Association championships and she was really just looking to get out and compete. "I knew there were going to be a lot of really fast girls here."

Sutter said she participated in the Thunder Run once before when she was in high school.

"That day, in particular, started out cloudy, but the clouds broke right before the race and made everything really hot," said Sutter. "I told myself I was never going to run it again, but I'm glad I was



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Melton

**Winning Form:** Garrett Kenyon breaks the ribbon winning the annual KFOR/National Guard Thunder Run 5-kilometer race at the Lincoln Airport and Nebraska National Guard air base, Aug. 9. Kenyon won with a time of 15 minutes and 20 seconds, 14 seconds ahead of his closest competition.

wrong and I am happy to be out here today."

Finishing first in the one-mile fun-run with a time of 6:21 was Grant Wasserman, 10. Helena Occansey, also 10, finished first in the girls category of the one-mile run and eighth-place overall with a time of 6:56.

Race Director, Tom Larson said there were more participants this

year than last year. "I am happy about that because runners have a lot of race choices to choose from these days. The National Guard participation and the aircraft static displays make this a great race for young runners," he said.

For more complete results of this year's Thunder Run go to the Lincoln Track Clubs website at [www.Lincolnrun.org](http://www.Lincolnrun.org).

# Cornhusker State Games Opening Ceremony

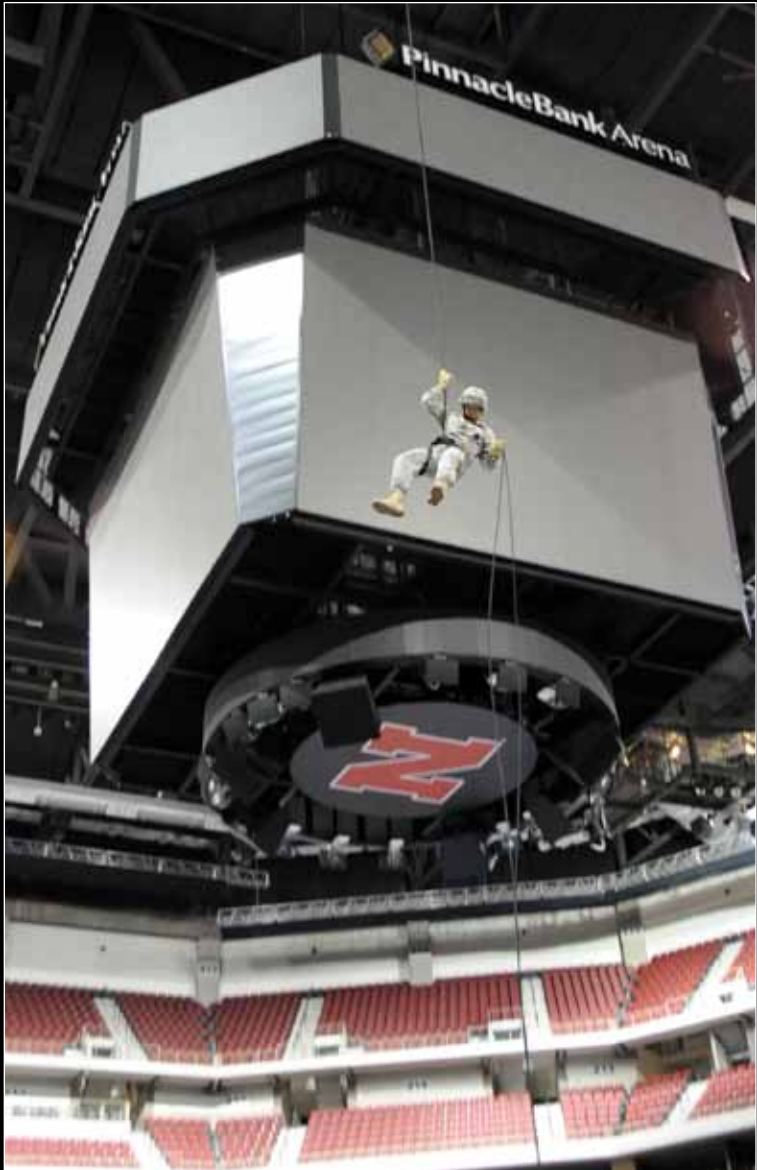


Photo by 1st Lt. Alex Salmon

**Going Down:** 1st Lt. Ryan Thompson, officer strength manager with Recruiting and Retention Battalion, performs a practice rappel from the rafters of the Pinnacle Bank Arena in Lincoln, Neb., July 18, prior to the opening ceremony of the Cornhusker State Games. Thompson and another Nebraska National Guard Soldier later rappelled into a darkened arena to the applause of thousands during the ceremony which officially kicked off the 30th edition of the games.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Hot Stuff:** Staff Sgt. Chad Morgan (middle), enlisted strength manager with Recruiting and Retention Battalion, and 1st Lt. Ryan Thompson (right), officer strength manager with Recruiting and Retention Battalion, stand behind Jack Hoffman, honorary torch lighter, at the opening ceremony of the Cornhusker State Games at Pinnacle Bank Arena in Lincoln, Neb., July 18. The Soldiers rappelled from the rafters of the arena to help Hoffman light the torch officially beginning the 30th edition of the games.



Photo by Maj. Kevin Hynes

**Big Screen:** A Nebraska National Guard Soldier gives a 'shout-out' during a video played on the big screen of Pinnacle Bank Arena in Lincoln, Neb., July 18, during the opening ceremony of the Cornhusker State Games. The Nebraska National Guard produced the video to help begin the 30th playing of the games.





Photos by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen

**Hot Brass:** A Soldier with the Nebraska Army National Guard fires her weapon during the 2014 Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise, or TAG Shoot, at Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb. The TAG Shoot provides Soldiers and Airmen an extra opportunity to practice their marksmanship skills while competing against fellow Guardsmen.



**Hot Range:** Nebraska Army and Air National Guardsmen take aim during the pistol portion of the 2014 Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise at Greenlief Training Site. The pistol phase provides competitors a chance to shoot a weapons not usually employed by all Guardsmen.



**Tight Pattern:** A Nebraska Army National Guardsman triangulates his shots during the zero phase of the 2014 Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise at Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb. A properly sighted weapon greatly increases a Soldier’s or Airman’s opportunity of winning the three-day competition.



**Perfect Aim:** A Nebraska Air National Guardsman fires his pistol during the 2014 Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise at Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb. The event provides Airmen and Soldiers an opportunity to train together as one competitive force.

# Army, Air Guardsmen from across state take aim at Nebraska marksmanship titles

By Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen  
Staff Writer

More than 160 Soldiers and Airmen from around the state of Nebraska gathered at the Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Nebraska, to hone their marksmanship skills during the 2014 Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise, or AG-MSX.

The three-day event, commonly referred to as the TAG Shoot, is a task-driven training exercise designed to test and improve the capabilities of our National Guard forces in a tactically oriented environment.

The weekend’s activities also provide Soldiers and Airmen an opportunity to shoot more in three days than they would normally shoot in more than three years.

That’s the case for Spc. Chantel Beazer, a unit supply specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 126th Chemical Battalion.

“Last year was familiarization with the ranges; this second time around, I want to make improvement to the last shoots,” she said. “You want to get your target shot and try for those headshots.”

The TAG Shoot is designed to incorporate new shooters annually and this year was no exception.

“I’m with new shooters, and I want them to have a good time, but the most important thing is getting out there and trying,” said Beazer. “We honestly came here to enjoy the range time and weekend – we’re motivated to rank better as a team.”

Over the course of three days, the shooters participated in several rifle and pistol qualifications, which all play in to the Ground Combat Power Doctrine. The doctrine has four elements: maneuver, firepower, protection, and leadership, with marksmanship a fundamental of all four elements.

But this event doesn’t just happen all by itself. It takes nearly as many support staff as it does shooters to pull off a safe and successful shoot.

“There are about 100 support-staff here to shoot this,” said Sgt. 1st Class Marc Sheehan, event noncommissioned officer-in-charge. “We try to pull volunteers first, but



**Leap of Faith:** Nebraska Army Guard Soldiers hurdle a wooden obstacle during the last event of the 2014 Adjutant General’s Marksmanship Sustainment Exercise at Greenlief Training Site near Hastings, Neb. The three-day exercise finishes with the competitor-favorite obstacle course event.

we have support staff from all over including medics from the 92nd Troop Command.”

Sheehan, who’s been involved in the shooting community for at least 15 years, emphasized the value of teamwork.

“Here, we’re building up the teams. We bring the whole state Guard together,” he said. “It’s a training event. You come here to learn. You come here to train. You take it back home. You get people trained.”

However, the TAG Shoot isn’t just an Army thing.

“We even have the Air Guard out here,” said Sheehan. “We had to get our brothers and sisters back together again.”

That’s exactly why Air Force Staff Sgt. Peter J. Gross-Rhode, a maintainer with the Lincoln-based 155th Air Refueling Wing, competes.

“I’ve been doing this now three years,” said Gross-Rhode. “I volunteer for this because I have a lot of fun. You’re not going to find a better group of people.”

Unlike many of the Soldiers who attended the event, Gross-Rhode said his team doesn’t necessarily get to train like this very often. “We’re not security forces. We don’t handle guns everyday – we handle wrenches.”

He added he enjoys a little interservice competition. “We try to beat these Army guys every chance we can get.”

When all the scores were tallied, the 2014 State Command Sgt. Maj. Combined Arms Individual Champion and Gary Anderson Trophy winner was Sgt. Max Maguire, with the Kearney-based 1195th Transportation Company.

“I love the TAG shoot,” said Maguire. “It was humbling to be up there and be recognized with some of the best shooters in the state.”

Maguire said the TAG shoot is one of many opportunities the Guard has given him to help hone his combative shooting skills.

Nebraska Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, stressed the importance of weapons training and proficiency with the U.S. military’s constant state of readiness.

“There’s a need for proficiency at small arms fire and weapons expertise to be ready whenever we might be called to go down range and do what we need to do in defense of this nation,” said Bohac. “Now, with our decreased (operations) tempo, training like this is ever more important.”

“This exercise, this weekend, and everything that leads up to it, in my view, remains critically important,” he added. “My hat’s off to you – for each and every one of you – for stepping up and engaging in this weekend and testing your skills against your fellow Soldiers and prevailing in the way that you did.”